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ABSTRACT

In this book, the methodology of cooperative learning, defined as the teaching strategy that involves children's participation in small group learning activities that promote positive interaction, is applied to early childhood education. The book contains the following chapters: (1) A Rationale for Cooperative Learning with Young Children, which covers appropriate learning environments, the role of cooperative learning, and the role of the teacher; (2) Group Building for Cooperation, including discussions of the need for group building, elements of group-building activities, group evaluation, whole class and paired group-building activities, and resources for group builders; (3) Nurturing Self-Esteem, which includes discussions of safety and security, success in school tasks, the identification of areas of personal strength and interest, group acceptance, and contributions to class success; (4) Social Skills and Cooperative Interaction, including discussions of cooperative interaction and children with special needs; (5) Communicating Effectively, which covers unfinished stories, oral language development, following directions, sharing teams, sharing team starters, thinking out loud together, and manipulatives; (6) Cooperation and Play, including discussions of the teacher's role, benefits, cooperative learning and cooperative play, dramatic play, songs and fingerplays, and resources for teachers; and (7) Making Decisions, which includes suggestions for activities. Contains approximately 85 references. (LB)

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Cooperative Learning in the Early Childhood Classroom

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Cooperative Learning in the Early Childhood Classroom

Harvey C. Foyle
Lawrence Lyman
Sandra Alexander Thies

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The Authors

Harvey C. Foyle is Assistant Professor of Education, Emporia State University, Kansas. He is a coauthor of *Cooperative Grouping for Interactive Learning*, published by NEA.

Lawrence Lyman is Associate Professor, The Teachers College, Emporia State University, Kansas. He is a coauthor of *Cooperative Grouping for Interactive Learning.*

Sandra Alexander Thies is Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education, The Teachers College, Emporia State University, Kansas.

The Advisory Panel

Peter C. Cross, Kindergarten Teacher, Spencer Borden School, Fall River, Massachusetts

Ruth I. Foster, Instructor/Supervisor of Elementary Student Teachers, Iowa State University, Ames

Patricia D. Freeman, Education Specialist, North Metro Technical Institute, Cartersville Lab, Cartersville, Georgia

Faith L. Garrold, Director of Curriculum, MSAD #56, Searsport, Maine

PREFACE

This book combines two topics that are not usually linked—early childhood education and Cooperative Learning. Birth through age eight (approximately third grade) is the age span that defines early childhood, according to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Bredekamp 1987). As a matter of convention, the words "Cooperative Learning" will be capitalized throughout this book. Since there are several approaches to the topic, the authors wish to refer to the whole methodology of Cooperative Learning, rather than to any one particular approach—thus, the capitalization. As we reviewed information on both topics, we found that some Cooperative Learning researchers do not adapt their materials below grade two; others indicate that grade four may be the lower grade limit for their approach; still others believe that their approach works at all grade levels. We noted a lack of coherent information about Cooperative Learning that is aimed specifically at the early childhood level, although one researcher holds workshops specifically for that level.

We hope that early childhood educators and Cooperative Learning practitioners will be able to combine these two areas on the basis of our understanding about Cooperative Learning as it applies to the young learner.

Who are the authors, and why do they have anything to say on the subject?

Harvey C. Foyle taught in public schools for 18 years and has been at Emporia State University for 4 years. Since 1981, he has used a variety of Cooperative Learning approaches in his classes, both in public schools and at the university. He has extensively researched the topic of Cooperative Learning and has conducted classroom field experiments in elementary schools. He is currently a curriculum and instruction faculty member.

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Lawrence Lyman taught elementary classes and was an elementary school principal for 13 years prior to joining the Emporia State University faculty 5 years ago. He has used Cooperative Learning both in the public schools and at the university. In addition, his specific knowledge of kindergarten through sixth grade learners has lent invaluable continuity to our understanding of Cooperative Learning. He is currently an elementary education faculty member.

Sandra Alexander Thies came to Emporia State University in 1990. Prior to accepting her current faculty position, she taught in the public schools for 15 years. She taught regular and special education, preschool through sixth grade, spending the greatest amount of time at the kindergarten level. She also served as a Cooperative Learning team facilitator for a staff development consortium of 24 public school districts. Currently, she is a member of the early childhood faculty.

All of the authors use Cooperative Learning in their classes, teach courses about Cooperative Learning, and conduct in-service workshops about Cooperative Learning.

Many teachers contributed to this volume. The authors wish to thank all those teachers who have helped develop the ideas presented in this material. In particular, the following early childhood educators who use Cooperative Learning have provided lessons to us. These lessons vary in content and style due to the many ways in which these educators have developed and presented them. In every case, however, each lesson attempts to point out at least one key feature of Cooperative Learning as it applies to a particular chapter topic.

Many thanks to all of these hard-working educators:

Robert L. Bull, Oklahoma State University Tech, Okmulgee, Oklahoma

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Dr. Dorothy G. Hamilton, Hamilton Associates: Consultants in Education, Columbia, Maryland

Dr. Mary McDonnell Harris, Center for Teaching and Learning, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota

Verlene Kling, McEowen Elementary School, Harrisonville, Missouri

Carol Ann Lewis, Rising Sun Elementary School, Elkton, Maryland

Vicky Lorentz, Buhler Grade School, Buhler, Kansas

Susan B. Lyman, Office of Professional Education Services, Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas

Jan Morehead, Walnut Elementary School, Emporia, Kansas

Linda Post, Mill City Elementary School, Dalton, Pennsylvania

Barbara Shafer, Nickerson Elementary School, Nickerson, Kansas

Lori A. Skolnick, Rosemary Hills Primary School, Silver Spring, Maryland

Melanie Smith, Highland Park South Elementary School, Topeka, Kansas

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Chapter 1

A RATIONALE FOR COOPERATIVE LEARNING WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Children are the living messages we send into a future we shall never see.

—Betty Siegel

Around the globe, presidents and premiers proclaim the critical importance of quality care and education for young citizens. President Bush, in his State of the Union message in January 1990, announced six national goals for education. The first was "that by the year 2000 all children in America will start to school ready to learn." Initially, concerned leaders prioritized good nutrition and health care for mothers and infants. But, increasingly, attention is being focused on the importance of early learning experiences.

Evidence indicates that an investment in the complex task of providing appropriate educational environments for young children will reap generous returns (Weikert 1989). However, the definition of appropriate education is the subject of continuing controversy. Despite consensus among preschool, kindergarten, and primary teachers that the focus of curricular decisions must be on "best practice," the recommendations for appropriate programs fall along a broad continuum from highly structured, cognitively oriented, and teacher-directed programs to open-structured models that employ teacher-child cooperatively initiated activities along with individualized, teacher-structured experiences. At the far end of the continuum are the unstructured, child-initiated models. Amidst the diversity of

early childhood programs and the debate over appropriate practice, some common threads emerge—rapid growth and uncertainty (Day 1988).

In the face of rapid expansion and the increasing complexity of providing appropriate experiences for young children, early childhood teachers must reflectively contemplate what the best practice is. Rejecting the easy answers, educators must seek what Boyer (1987) calls the "elegance of understanding." Optimal growth and development for every child must be at the heart of this quest. The fulfillment of the potential of young children depends on orchestrating environments that meet their needs.

APPROPRIATE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has a position statement on developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs (Bredekamp 1987), which opposes the recent trend toward increased formal, teacher-directed drill and practice on isolated academic skills. In addition, Bredekamp presents emerging research, which affirms that the most effective learning occurs through a child-directed concrete, play-oriented approach. The push for early academics is at odds with the basic developmental needs of children and is diametrically opposed to what we know about how children learn.

Young children learn best in an environment in which an integrated approach is used to facilitate all areas of development: physical, emotional, social, and cognitive. An appropriate curriculum, based on teacher observations of children's interests and abilities, includes activities that are concrete, real, and relevant to children's lives. Appropriate environments provide opportunities for children to communicate in small groups and to work individually. The emphasis is on learning as an active exploration process embedded in interactions with adults, peers,

and materials. As children choose from a variety of activities, adults assist and guide them, based on what is individually appropriate for each child (Bredekamp and Shepard 1989).

For decades, educators have acknowledged that basic self-concept needs—a sense of identity, trust, belonging, and acceptance by others—are prerequisite to learning. Children must feel valued for who they are and what they are as individuals (Glasser 1986, Katz, 1988). With this foundation in place, children can build communication and social skills and develop the self-confidence to explore, solve problems, and resolve conflicts as they negotiate human relationships and investigate their world.

Addressing these needs and establishing an environment conducive to the development of capable individuals require that the curriculum be flexible and dynamic—not static. Rigid programs with the inappropriate expectation that children must be "ready" or be "screened out" are based on misconceptions about how children learn. Learning experiences must be shaped by children's developmental needs, not represent a mold to which children must conform.

Weikert (1989) reported the results of a ten-year follow-up study, which suggests that children in "developmentally appropriate and child-initiated programs—who plan, who have responsibility of their own making and who initiate their own work—develop the capacity to work independently of adults" (p. 28). They maintained their own goals and organized their own futures into adolescence and will probably continue to do so into adulthood.

This same study suggested that children who learn by working within rigidly defined limits, who pursue fixed objectives predetermined by adults, and who develop little personal investment in these activities develop a sense of separation from school. This appears in adolescence as alienation from society and in high delinquency rates. Cooperative Learning is one methodology that offers a cooperative-interactive

approach to meeting children's needs within an appropriate learning environment.

THE ROLE OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Peer collaboration as a vehicle for social and cognitive skill development is *not* a new concept. Children working together on a common task with a singular goal has long been recognized as a beneficial strategy (Dewey 1966). Since the inception of early childhood education, cooperative efforts have been integral to the development of the whole child. Cooperative activity occurs spontaneously with young children, and collaboration seems to be a natural phenomenon. However, these efforts often do not work out well, and much of what looks like cooperation really is not (Tudge & Caruso 1988). In order to develop the skills to learn cooperatively, young children need appropriate experiences, adequate time, and opportunities to process those experiences. Although a positive learning climate is supportive of peer-interactive learning, specific structure and process must be provided. The teacher must construct methods and frameworks for group functioning. Only then will group interactions result in Cooperative Learning: "Cooperative learning is a teaching strategy involving children's participation in small group learning activities that promote positive interaction" (Lyman & Foyle, *Cooperative Learning Strategies*, 1988).

Several hundred classroom studies over the past 20 years have repeatedly confirmed the positive cognitive and social benefits of Cooperative Learning. Students experiencing Cooperative Learning consistently achieve at higher levels than do students learning by other methods. The former are motivated, are interested, and like the content better when cooperative group work is a major strategy in learning activities. Socially, students feel accepted and included by peers. The cooperative group identity translates into positive social values and behaviors (Lyman & Foyle 1990). Groups of researchers involved in these

studies include the Johnsons in Minnesota; Slavin, DeVries, and Frank Lyman in Maryland; Aronson and Kagan in California; and Sharan in Israel.

The relationship between Cooperative Learning and early childhood education is this: the process of peer interaction within a group-interdependent structure (Cooperative Learning) provides several of the components critical for effective learning in young children (early childhood education). Cooperative Learning includes several basic principles. *Positive interdependence* in a *heterogeneous group* promotes acceptance, inclusion, and caring for others. Children with diverse ideas collaborate on a task that no one member could achieve alone. *Group interaction* develops communication skills (speaking and listening) and social skills, which become the primary tools for task accomplishment and success as a group. Active involvement within a small group or pair offers opportunities for self-direction, problem solving, and conflict resolution. *Individual accountability* requires personal investment and builds individual responsibility for learning. Each child's contribution to *group success* is acknowledged through *group rewards*, processing and evaluating group performance on the task and in cooperative behaviors. (See Figure 1.)

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Figure 1
Cooperative Learning Components
and Learning Needs of Young Children

HETEROGENEOUS GROUPS "max mix"	Sense of identity Sense of acceptance/inclusion Sense of belonging to group
POSITIVE INTERDEPENDENCE "pulling together"	Trust building Child directed Motivation Learner responsibility
GROUP INTERACTION "Let's do it!"	Communication skills Social skills Problem solving/conflict resolution Active involvement
GROUP REWARD "We did it!"	Task completion/pride Bonding to group Motivation
INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY "I did my part!"	Value to group/belonging Learner responsibility Individual progress check
SUCCESS "We did it WELL!!!"	Group processing/evaluation Planning/self-direction Motivation

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

The teacher's role is critical to the success of Cooperative Learning. Selecting children for pairs or small groups; designating "roles" in the task; monitoring, observing, and intervening during group interactions; and providing for individual accountability and group rewards are all vital elements of the process. Cooperative Learning is often viewed as an easily understood concept, but, in reality, it is extremely complex in implementation. "Think big . . . start small!" is wise advice in embracing any new teaching strategy—especially this one!

Young children from three and one-half to five years of age work best in pairs. First and second graders with good social skills can operate in teams of three or four. To begin with, though, coupling children into "partners," "pairs," or "buddies" is a productive choice, even up through third grade. Pairs can always work together for a while and then compare notes with another pair in a group of four (Lyman 1981).

Partners may not change for several days or weeks in primary grades. These long-term pairs can work together on such academics as spelling word activities, can become reading buddies who read to one another, or can cooperatively write or edit stories each has written. Younger pairs might cooperate in dressing tasks, such as buttoning a paint smock or putting on clothing for outdoor play. Other cooperative activities might include blocks, puzzles, art projects, cooking, and puppet plays that require more than one set of hands. The important components are the positive interdependence and individual accountability to self and the group for its success. The lesson "Help Dress the Person for Winter" is an example of a cooperative partner activity that encourages positive interdependence with shared materials.

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Help Dress the Person for Winter
(Winter Clothing Activity)
Dorothy Hamilton

Objective: Students will share materials promoting positive interdependence.

Group Structure: Partners.

Procedure:

1. The teacher shows the children a hat that is obviously used in warm weather (e.g., visor used in golf, large-brimmed sun hat). The children are asked to relate the uses of the hat and the materials from which it is made to the kind of weather in which it would be used.
2. A second hat—one that is heavy, is perhaps knitted, and pulls down over the ears—is compared and contrasted with the first hat.
3. Items of clothing that would be worn with the heavy winter hat are displayed by the teacher (e.g., boots, mittens, coat, scarf).
4. Each child is given one drawing of a winter hat that has a numeral on it. There are matching numerals on two drawings. Partners are formed as each child finds the person with the matching numeral.
5. Each set of partners is given one large sheet of paper (18" x 24") and one box of crayons. The children next
   a. Draw one large picture of a person dressed warmly for winter.
   b. Write the partners' names on the back of the paper.
6. The children are asked to bring their pictures to the large-group meeting place. The teacher collects the pictures. Each child is asked to tell the part(s) of the picture that his partner drew. Students are encouraged to name the parts by the kind of winter clothing that the partner drew.

Comments:

1. The cooperative drawing activity may be applied to any topic.
2. As children become more proficient in working with partners, the task can be done in groups of four. If groups of four work together, larger papers are usually needed. "Butcher" paper, which is often used for murals, can be used.

3. This activity is a good "group builder." If the teacher observes that one child dominates the activity, the teacher might want to build in the sharing of the drawing by using one of the following techniques:
   a. Indicate a time to switch to the other partner by ringing a bell.
   b. Assign selected crayon colors to each partner; only that partner may draw with those colors.
4. Intermittent use of this activity is one way to assess/evaluate the cooperative skills of young children.
5. At times when there is a large-group discussion, the Think-Pair-Share approach (Lyman 1981, 1987) may be used.

For any age level, cooperatively planning the day, planning a project, and brainstorming solutions to a classroom/playground problem are all worthwhile and productive activities. Young children can understand cooperation as they see it in their daily lives, especially since "helpers" are commonly assigned in centers and schools. The concept of *positive interdependence*, the heart of Cooperative Learning, is a tricky one. The idea that "I can't do this alone, but we can do it together" can be illustrated on the playground with the teeter-totter or merry-go-round. Ask a child how long she would have to sit on the teeter-totter by herself in order to go up and down. What is missing? Of course! Another person has to sit on the other end and cooperate! With older children in primary grades the example of team sports serves well to illustrate positive interdependence. One player cannot win the game alone, but if the players work together as a team, with each player fulfilling a role/responsibility, the team can score! Celebration is important when a game is played well. Celebration should be a part of learning and working well together in the classroom. At least silent cheers would be appropriate!

The following two-part lesson, "The Three Little Pigs," is a language development activity for preschool-kindergarten. This approach could be adapted for ESL students. Note the components of Cooperative Learning evident in the lesson.

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The Three Little Pigs
Britt Vasquez

PART 1

Grade Level: Preschool.

Subject Area: Language.

Procedure:

1. Select a lesson: "The Three Little Pigs." Part 1 on concept/vocabulary readiness precedes Part 2.
2. Make the following decisions:
   a. Group size: Pairs, then a large group of eight.
   b. Assignment to groups: Teacher assigns one more language proficient child as a buddy with one less language proficient child.
   c. Room arrangement: First, children sit on carpeted area, then move to sit/stand next to their buddies around a round table.
   d. Materials: Each pair will need a bucket. In each bucket is a baggie of straw, a baggie of sticks, a baggie with chunks of brick in it, a small toy pig, and a small toy wolf. (If toys cannot be obtained, use pictures.)
   e. Assigning roles: Bucket Person—holds the bucket; Picker—takes items out of the bucket/puts items back into the bucket.
3. Set the lesson task: State the following in language your students understand.

Boys and girls, today we are going to learn some new words and use the words to play a game. You will work with a buddy. [Read the names of buddies and have them sit on the rug.] Hold your buddy's hand up in the air so I can see who your buddy is. [Monitor.]

One of you will be the Bucket Person. The Bucket Person holds the bucket when I hand it out. What does the Bucket Person do? [Elicit response: *holds the bucket.*] One of you will be the Picker. The Picker takes items out of the bucket and puts items back into the bucket. What does the Picker do? [*Takes things out of the bucket and puts them back.*]

[Pass out the buckets.]

Leave everything in the bucket. Watch me. I have something long and yellow and soft. [Show a handful of straw.] It's called

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straw. Say "straw." [*Straw.*] Very good. What color is straw? [*Yellow.*] What do you think straw is used for? [Elicit responses. *Straw is used to make beds for animals, and sometimes for people. Sometimes animals eat straw.*] What do you think happens to straw when you squish it with your hand? [*It mashes up.*] Pickers, in your bucket is a bag of straw. Take it out of the bucket. Open the bag, and you and your buddy touch the straw. Squish it and smell it. Do you think you'd like to eat it? [*No way!*] What do you think would happen if you made a house out of straw? [*It would fall down.*] Let's put the straw back in the baggies and put the baggies back in the bucket.

[Repeat the process for the sticks and for the bricks. Modify the process for the pig and the wolf as follows.] Have you ever seen a real pig? What color is it? How does it smell? What does it say? What does it eat? Does it wear clothes? Where does a pig live? [*In a barn or in a sty.*]

[Collect the buckets.]

You've learned some interesting words. [Hold up each item, one at a time.] Let's see what you've learned. What do we call this? [*Straw.* Repeat for each item.]

Let's play a game with these words. Hold your buddy's hand and walk to the game table. . . . Now let's look at our game board. [See Figure 2.] You and your buddy will be a team. Each team gets to select a token. If you are the Bucket Person, you get to select the token. [Let each Bucket Person select a token and put it on "Go."] Your token is trying to get to the Brick House (at the end). But it can only move when it is your team's turn. When can you move your token? [*When it is our turn.*] To move you must draw a card and say the name of what is on the card. [The cards have pictures of straw, sticks, bricks, a pig, and a wolf on them.]

You may move three spaces each time one of your team can tell us what is on the card. [To ensure each child practices the words, have the children alternate, so that the person who did *not* give an answer during the previous round must give the answer this time.] It is all right for buddies to help/tell each other as long as the person whose turn it is actually says the word. If you cannot say the word, you can get help from the rest of the teams. If the other teams help you say the word, you may move two spaces. When you get to the Brick House, you may trade your token in for two stickers, one for you and one for your buddy.

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While we play the game, you must take turns. What does take turns mean? [*First you, then me. Or if there are several children, first one, then the next, then the next, until it gets back to me so everyone gets a chance to play.*] Can we take turns today? [Play the game going round-robin around the table.]

a. *Variation:* Have a game cloth on the floor. One of the buddies is the token and gets to move from space to space by jumping, hopping, or walking.
b. *Positive interdependence:* Goal interdependence—Each one must say the new word in order to move the token. Buddies may help each other identify and say the correct word. Role interdependence—The Bucket Person holds the bucket, and the Picker removes and replaces items.
c. *Individual accountability:* Each person must take a turn saying the word.
d. *Criteria for success:* To be successful, each child must stay with her buddy, take turns, feel the new things in the bucket, and guess words during the game.
e. *Social behaviors expected:* Taking turns. First one, then the other. Or, if there are several children, first one, then the next, then the next, until it gets back to the first child, so everyone gets a chance to play.

4. Monitor and evaluate:
   a. *Evidence of expected behaviors (appropriate actions):* The teacher will stay with the group of eight during the game time and monitor continuously.
   b. *Observation form:* None.
      Observer: None.
   c. *Plans for evaluation/feedback:* When a team reaches the Brick House, the teacher will say, "Tell me about one time you and your buddy took turns."
5. Evaluate student outcomes:

	Poorly		Adequately		Completely	
a. How well did students achieve their task?	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. How well did groups function?	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. How well did individual students function?	1	2	3	4	5	6

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6. Evaluate lesson outcomes:
   a. Task achievement
   b. Group function
   c. Notes on individuals
   d. What went well?
   e. What would you do differently next time?

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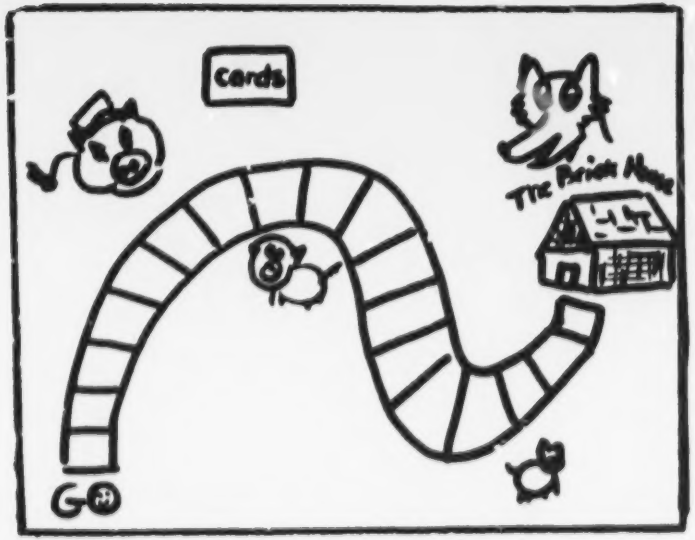
Figure 2
Gameboard for
"The Three Little Pigs" Lesson



Keep the gameboard
Simple

PART 2

Grade Level: Preschool.

Subject Area: Language.

Procedure:

1. Select a lesson: "The Three Little Pigs," Part 2 on remembering.
2. Make the following decisions:
   a. Group size: Children will work in pairs.
   b. Assignment to groups: Teacher assigns pairs of children, one more language proficient and the other less language proficient, as buddies.
   c. Room arrangement: Pairs work together, side by side, at small tables.
   d. Materials: One set of two uncolored sequencing cards of "The Three Little Pigs" (6" x 8"), one "mat" (a large sheet of construction paper 17" x 22") with the letter *L* printed on the left side of the sheet, and one red necklace.
   e. Assigning roles: Story Teller—tells the story; Card Placer—places the story cards in order.
3. Set the lesson task: State the following in language your students understand:

[The task follows at least one lesson where the teacher reads a story, shows two sequencing picture cards about the story he has just read, describes what is happening in each picture card, and then models sequencing from left to right, using a mat as described below.]

Today, we are going to listen to a story. It's about pigs. Can anyone guess what the name of the story is? [Entertain guesses.] That's right, it's The Three Little Pigs!

First, I will read the story to you. Then you will work with a buddy. You and your buddy will be given two picture cards. The cards *show* the story of "The Three Little Pigs." You and your buddy may look at the cards and decide what each card *shows* about the story. It will help you to listen carefully to the story.

Then you and your buddy will decide which picture happened *first* in the story and which picture happened *last* in the story.

[Read the story to the children. Since they will be working with their buddies at the tables to do the sequencing, allow them to sit or lie comfortably on a carpeted area to hear the story.]

Now we will work with our picture cards. Look at what interesting pictures we have today. [Hold up each picture for the children to see. If the children are not very verbal, discuss what is in each picture. Then read the names of buddies and have them sit at their tables.]

Hold your buddy's hand up in the air so I can see who your buddy is. [Monitor.]

Terrific! Everyone has a buddy to work with today.

One buddy will decide which picture happened *first* in the story and which picture happened *last* in the story.

Now I will tell you what to do. One of you will be the Story Teller. The Story Teller will tell me the story of "The Three Little Pigs." The Story Teller will have a red necklace to wear today. [Place a red necklace around the neck of each child who will be the Story Teller. The first time the Story Teller should be the most verbal child.] Who will tell me the story today? [*The Story Teller.*]

Terrific! Next, if you are *not* the Story Teller, you will be the Card Placer. Your job will be to put the story cards in order, from left to right. Only the Card Placer may touch the story cards. Who will touch the story cards? [*The Card Placer.*] That's right, the Card Placer.

Look at your mats. Where is "left"? [Children should point to the letter *L* on the left side of their mats.] Wonderful, that *is* left. It is the left side of the mat. You know that because the *L* is there to remind us.

Card Placers, I will give you the cards. Show each card to your buddy. Together talk about what the card shows. Ask your buddy, "What's in the picture?"

Now, you and your buddy will decide which picture happened *first* in the story and which picture happened *last* in the story. Ask your buddy, "Which happened first?" [Give them time.] All right, Card Placers, take the picture that happened *first* and place it on the left side of your mat next to the *L*. [Monitor to see that everyone gets it correct. If incorrect, ask the Story Teller if she agrees with which card was placed. Discuss. Repeat for the last card.]

Wonderful. You've done such a great job! Let's color our Three Pigs story cards. I will put a basket of crayons on each table. You and your buddy may each color one picture. You may share the crayons. What does "share" mean? [Elicit responses. *"Share" means sometimes I get to use it, and sometimes you get to use it.*

We both get to use it.] Will everybody share? [Look for nods from every child.]

While you are coloring, I will come around and ask the Story Teller to tell me the story of the three pigs. If you are the Story Teller's buddy, you may help out telling the story. It's all right to practice telling the story to your buddy before I get to your table.

[Go to each table and have the Story Teller tell the story. You may ask questions of each child. For language-delayed or ESL students, you may first ask the question of the more verbally proficient child and then repeat the question for the less verbally proficient child so the child only has to repeat the correct response. You may want to prompt the correct response as follows: What did the Big Bad Wolf do to the Pig's house? The bad wolf huffed . . . and puffed . . . and blew the house down. Julio, what did the bad wolf do? Say it with me (or say with your buddy): "huffed . . . and puffed . . . and blew the house down." Terrific.]

Boys and girls, you've done a wonderful job. Everyone told me the story of The Three Little Pigs. Everyone had their story cards in order. Everyone colored their story cards. What do you get to do? [*Give my buddy a prize.*] Give your buddy a pat on the back and thank your buddy for her help, and I'll be around with the prize box so you may select a prize for your buddy.

a. *Positive interdependence:* Goal interdependence—Each pair of buddies must arrange the cards in order, tell the teacher the story of The Three Little Pigs, and color their story cards. Materials interdependence—Each pair of buddies will have one set of story cards, one work mat, and one set of crayons to share. Role interdependence—One student in each pair is the Story Teller. The Story Teller will tell the teacher the story. The other student is the Card Placer. Only the Card Placer can place the cards in order. The Card Placer may give ideas to the Story Teller to help him tell the story. Reward interdependence—If the students put their cards in order, tell the teacher the story, and color their cards, each one may select a prize for her buddy.
b. *Individual accountability:* The teacher will visit each group to see that only the Card Placer is putting the cards in order and to listen to the Story Teller.
c. *Criteria for success:* To do a good job, the Story Teller must tell the teacher the story of The Three Little Pigs, and the Card

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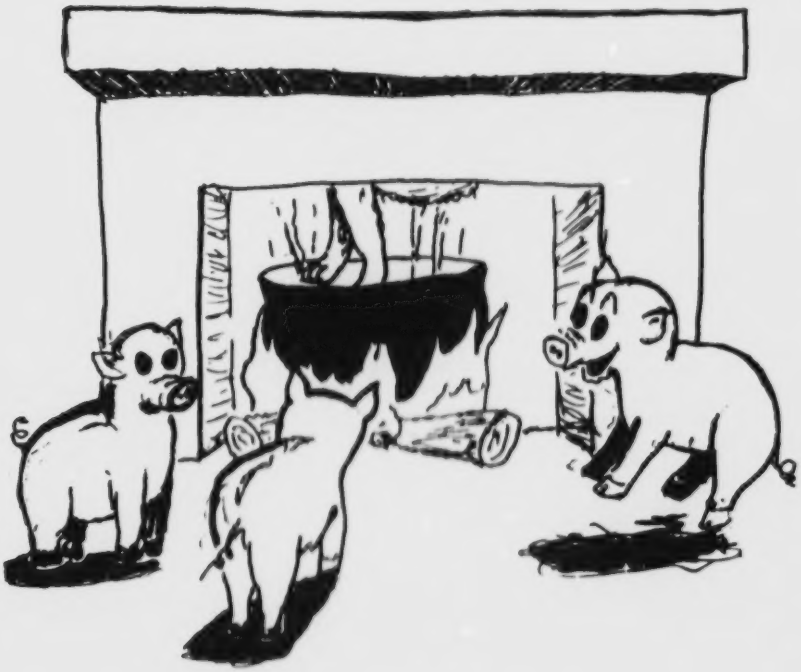
Figure 3

Figure 4

The wolf came down the chimney. . .



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Placer must place the cards in order. Both students must color their cards.

d. *Social behaviors expected:* Sharing. Sometimes one buddy gets to use it, and sometimes the other gets to use it. They both get to use it when they share.

4. Monitor and evaluate:
   a. *Evidence of expected behaviors (appropriate actions):* The teacher will monitor each pair for sharing behavior.
   b. *Observation form:* None.
      Observer: None.
   c. *Plans for evaluation/feedback:* The teacher will ask the children:
      - "Raise your hands if your Card Placer placed the cards in the right order. . . ."
      - "Raise your hands if your Story Teller told me the story. . . ."
      - "Raise your hands if you colored your cards. . . ."
5. Evaluate student outcomes:

	Poorly		Adequately		Completely	
a. How well did students achieve their task?	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. How well did groups function?	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. How well did individual students function?	1	2	3	4	5	6

6. Evaluate lesson outcomes:
   a. Task achievement
   b. Group function
   c. Notes on individuals
   d. What went well?
   e. What would you do differently next time?

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CONCLUSION

Cooperative Learning *does* provide an approach that fosters acceptance and inclusion, communication skills, and learner responsibility within a peer-interactive, group-interdependent structure. The developmental needs of young children can be met as they experience the Cooperative Learning process.

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Chapter 2

GROUP BUILDING FOR COOPERATION

> *Group building is the process of creating a cohesive group that functions positively and productively to accomplish tasks.*
>
> *—Lawrence Lyman and Harvey Foyle*

One of the basic tasks of the early childhood teacher is to help children develop the social skills necessary for positive interaction with others. Because children come to the teacher with a variety of cultural backgrounds, social experiences, and skill levels, activities to build the classroom group are needed.

THE NEED FOR GROUP BUILDING

Young children are preoccupied with themselves. The primary goal of group building (Lyman & Foyle 1990), therefore, is to help each child become aware of others in a positive way. Group building also helps the child affirm his own special talents and abilities, while developing an appreciation for the talents and abilities of other children.

Two kinds of group building are needed in the early childhood classroom. *Whole class* group-building activities are used to build class morale, develop team spirit, and promote awareness of others in the class. *Paired* group-building activities are designed to bring students together in pairs to develop awareness of others, build communication skills, foster trust, and provide practice in interacting successfully with others.

ELEMENTS OF GROUP-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Lyman and Foyle (1990) define five essential elements of group-building activities. Group-building activities involve heterogeneous grouping, bringing together students who would not necessarily have chosen to work together. Group-building activities promote positive interdependence, while maintaining the individual accountability of each student for participation in the group. Group-building activities should have a high probability of student success, and group reward should be used, as appropriate, to assure that the child's early experiences with cooperation are positive.

Heterogeneous grouping involves pairing students with other students. The teacher does this with the goal that all students in the classroom will have the opportunity to work together in a pair at some time. Heterogeneous grouping permits children to encounter peers who may look or act differently or who have different ideas and viewpoints. Positive situations are designed to build appreciation and liking.

Positive interdependence is a key element of any Cooperative Learning activity. Positive interdependence means that each member of the group must be actively involved if the task is to be successful. In whole class group-building activities, every child must have an important role in the group task and must honestly feel that her participation is essential to the group's success.

In paired group-building activities, care must be taken that one child does not do all of the task. This can be accomplished by assigning each child specific responsibilities or roles related to the task. If the teacher distributes materials to a pair, for example, one student could be the "counter," who makes sure the pair has the correct number of items, and the other student could be the "sorter," who makes sure the items are arranged or sequenced appropriately.

Positive interdependence in whole class and in paired group-building activities results in *individual accountability*; that

is, each individual is actively participating in the activity and contributing to the group effort. In whole class group building, the teacher monitors to make sure all children are participating in the activity.

Participation can be encouraged by grouping reluctant students near students with whom they feel confident. Having more confident students demonstrate the task before the whole group does the task may also relieve anxiety. Competition between students should be discouraged because competition increases anxiety among some students and causes them to withdraw. Competition with last year's group or a previous personal performance may be more appropriate.

In paired group-building activities, the teacher monitors to make sure each student is participating according to the directions given. If specific responsibilities or roles have been assigned, the teacher checks to see that each child is doing what he has been assigned to do. If one child is dominating the activity, the teacher can refer to the assigned roles to clarify each child's responsibility.

Success is perhaps the most crucial factor in group-building activities. These activities need to be designed so that children experience success in their early efforts to cooperate with others. When children experience success, their desire to participate in other cooperative activities is enhanced. For this reason, teachers should avoid comparing or grading performances during group-building activities. All children who participate should be rewarded for their effort and involvement in the activity.

Group reward is provided for successful participation in group-building activities. If the activity is fun, no other reward may be needed since intrinsic rewards are most fulfilling. However, early childhood teachers may choose to use verbal praise, food rewards, singing of a favorite song, an art activity, free play time, or other suitable rewards for a job well done. Many younger children like to see themselves on videotape, so some

activities may be taped as a reward. The use of appropriate rewards shows the children that the teacher values cooperation and appreciates their efforts to work together cooperatively.

GROUP EVALUATION

Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (Johnson & Johnson 1990) identify the importance of group processing in Cooperative Learning. Group processing is the component that involves Cooperative Learning participants in discussing their success: how well they have worked together, how well they have achieved their goals, and how they could improve their work next time. With young children, such processing is limited somewhat by the level of communication skills; but, teachers can help the children recognize and articulate positive feelings about cooperating, benefits of working together, and positive attitudes about other children gained from cooperative activities.

Group-building activities provide opportunities for group processing. At the conclusion of a whole class group-building activity or a paired group-building activity, the teacher can ask questions to facilitate the discussion of how well cooperation has taken place during the activity. Questions that can encourage groups to evaluate their work together can be adapted to the ages and abilities of the children. The "Questions to Encourage Group Evaluation" listed in Figure 5 might be useful for group processing.

Figure 5
Questions to Encourage Group Evaluation

1. Why is it important for us to work together?
2. In the last activity, how did we work together?
3. Why were you glad to have others to help you in the activity we just did?
4. Why was each person important in the last activity?
5. What could have happened if you hadn't worked together so

well in the last activity?
6. How did you have fun working together?
7. How did you help your group?
8. Who did a particularly good job of helping?
9. (After a paired activity) Tell the whole group one thing you learned about your partner.
10. (After a paired activity) Tell your partner one thing you enjoyed about working with her.

Group evaluation, as in sports where videotapes help teams review what was done well or not so well, can also be encouraged by using photographs or videotapes of cooperative activities. As children are working together, the teacher can take pictures or videotape the groups. While looking at the pictures or videotape, the children can be asked to identify ways they see people working together, how people are helping each other, and why it is important to work together. Photographs can also be displayed on a cooperative bulletin board to remind students of the importance of working cooperatively.

WHOLE CLASS GROUP-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

One of the most challenging tasks facing the early childhood teacher is molding the diverse individuals in a class into a cohesive group that works cooperatively by showing consideration, respecting others, sharing, and listening to others. Whole class group-building activities help the teacher meet this challenge by providing opportunities for the children to work together successfully and positively. The lessons "We're Connected!" "Cooperative Weaving," and "Just Like Me!" illustrate whole class group-building activities.

We're Connected!
(Movement Exploration)

Objective: Students will review parts of the body while working cooperatively with others.

Procedure: To begin the activity, students work in pairs. Each pair of students is given a long balloon. The teacher will have one pair of children model how the others will "connect" with each other. The pair chosen to model will support the balloon between their noses. Each pair will then practice supporting the balloon between their noses. The teacher will then give other directions for supporting the balloons:

1. Connect the balloon between your knees. (One knee of each partner supports the balloon.)
2. Connect the balloon between your elbows. (One elbow of each partner supports the balloon.)
3. Connect the balloon between your hands. (One hand of each partner supports the balloon.)
4. Connect the balloon between your backs.
5. Connect the balloon between your feet. (One foot of each partner supports the balloon.)

The teacher will then provide additional balloons. Each pair will again support the balloon between their noses (or backs). New balloons will be used to join each pair with another pair. (Any appropriate part of the body is acceptable.) By continuing this process, all members of the class can be joined together by balloon connectors.

Group Evaluation: After the activity, the teacher can ask the children to tell what they enjoyed about the activity. The children can also share why everybody had to work together to make the activity succeed.

Cooperative Weaving
(Art)
Julia Ferguson

Objective: Students will create a group weaving project.

Procedure: Students will paint with watercolors on two large sheets of white butcher paper (4' x 8' sheets work well). Primary colors can be used, or colors can be adapted to the season of the year: pastel colors for spring, bright colors for summer, colors mixed with white and black paint to produce tints and shades of color for winter. One of the completed sheets is folded lengthwise and cut into one-inch strips. These strips will serve as the weft for the weaving project. The other sheet is folded in half and cut at one-inch intervals from the fold up to two inches from the open edge. When the paper is opened, it will serve as the warp for weaving. Students then work together to weave the strips. Because of the size of the project, students should work together on the floor. The final result is an attractive group project.

Group Evaluation: Children can look at the completed project and identify their own strips of color and the areas of the project they helped with.

Just Like Me!
(Classification)

Objective: Students will recognize characteristics they share with other students by forming teacher-directed groups.

Procedure: The teacher will select common characteristics that are observable in the class. Students will be instructed to form "Just Like Me!" groups with other students who have the same characteristics. Examples:

- white shoes, brown shoes, other colored shoes
- black hair, brown hair, blond hair, red hair
- names that start with the same letter
- names that have the same number of letters
- Students who like white milk, chocolate milk, no milk

(Allow students to suggest other groupings if the age and ability of the class permit.)

Group Evaluation: The teacher can ask students to remember who was in one of their groups or have them draw a picture of the group for display.

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PAIRED GROUP-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Pairs provide an excellent structure for children's first experiences with Cooperative Learning. The goal of paired group-building activities is to have children encounter as many others in the class as possible. Paired group-building activities provide awareness of the similarities and differences of other children in the class. Success in these experiences builds trust in others, as well as enhancing communication and other social skills. The lessons "Getting to Know You," "Matching Game," and "What's in the Bag?" illustrate paired group-building activities.

Getting to Know You
(Visual and Auditory Discrimination)

Objective: Working in pairs, students will respond accurately to spoken directions.

Procedure: Students will work together in pairs selected by the teacher. Their task is to listen carefully and do what the teacher says.

A. Visual discrimination: Tell students to stand up if their partner is wearing
   1. something red
   2. something blue
   3. something green
   4. something yellow
   5. shoes with white on them
   6. a shirt with a picture on it
   7. a shirt with buttons on it
   8. something in her hair

B. Interaction: Tell students they will need to ask their partner to find out whether or not to stand up for each of the questions. Tell them to stand if their partner
   1. has a dog
   2. has a cat
   3. has a brother
   4. has a sister
   5. had cereal for breakfast
   6. watched TV before school this morning
   7. walked to school this morning
   8. likes chocolate milk
   9. likes to play outside
   10. likes to come to school

Group Evaluation: The teacher can ask students to share one or more things they found out about their partner with the whole group.

Matching Game
(Communication Skills)

Objective: Through cooperative discussion, students will identify similar likes and preferences.

Procedure: Children work in pairs. The teacher reads items from the list below, one at a time. Students are given a minute to identify as many matches as they can. A match could be made, for example, if both find they like chocolate ice cream (example 1). After each example, students share one of their matches with the whole group. Students should take turns sharing for their pair (one student shares for example 1, the other for example 2, and so on).

1. Find foods you and your partner both like.
2. Find things you and your partner both like to do.
3. Find things you and your partner both like about school.
4. Find things you and your partner both are wearing.
5. Find colors you and your partner both like.
6. Find television shows you and your partner both watch.
7. Find holidays you and your partner both like.
8. Find things you and your partner both know how to do.

Group Evaluation: Lists can be made of the favorite foods, television shows, etc., of the whole class, using information from the activity. These lists can be displayed in the classroom.

What's in the Bag?
(Problem Solving)

Objective: Given a brown bag with an unknown object in it, pairs of students will work together to identify the object.

Procedure: A number of items with different textures are placed in paper bags. There should be enough bags so every two students can have one. Objects that work well are sponges, tennis balls, combs, crayons, straws, wadded-up pieces of paper, spoons, chalk, chalkboard erasers, and lids from plastic containers. Each pair is given a bag. The teacher cautions that students may not look into the bag or shake the bag. The teacher plays music while pairs exchange bags. (One member of each pair can be designated as the "exchanger" to avoid confusion.) When the music stops, the pair tries to identify what is in the bag they now have. Each child must reach into the bag, and both must agree on what the object is. After a short time, the teacher goes around to each pair and asks them to identify what they think is in their bag. The bag is then opened to check if the group identified the object correctly. The bags can be passed around again as desired.

Group Evaluation: Students can be asked to tell their partners one thing they enjoyed about the activity. Responses can be shared with the whole group, if desired.

CONCLUSION

Early childhood students are often inexperienced in cooperating with others. Group-building activities help these children practice cooperating in pleasant activities with a high probability of success for each child. Whole class group-building activities can help to make the class more cohesive and positive by providing opportunities for the group to work together. Paired group builders allow children to practice communication and other social skills with a variety of different children. Group building is an essential preface to success in other cooperative activities.

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Chapter 3

NURTURING SELF-ESTEEM

Learning to love yourself is the greatest love of all.

—George Benson

Building positive self-esteem in children is one of the major goals of the early childhood teacher. Student self-esteem has been positively correlated with increased academic achievement, greater enthusiasm for learning, better mental health and emotional stability, and the ability to interact positively with others. Children with high self-esteem can be identified by five major factors:

1. They feel safe and secure in the class.
2. They experience success in school tasks.
3. They identify areas of personal talent and interest.
4. They feel accepted by other children and adults.
5. They contribute to the success of the class and view themselves as an important part of the class.

Cooperative Learning strategies can assist the teacher in promoting the self-esteem of children. Since self-esteem is directly influenced by the child's perceptions of how others view him, positive interaction in cooperative settings enhances self-esteem and encourages the child to view himself and others more positively.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Models of effective schools have defined a safe and orderly environment as a basic criterion of school effectiveness.

Children cannot learn and grow when they feel emotionally or physically threatened. While the teacher has primary responsibility for maintaining safety in the early childhood classroom, helping children become aware of the feelings and needs of other students can also help them become more considerate of each other.

In a safe and secure environment, the child is able to express herself without fear of ridicule or embarrassment. The child is able to take risks by doing things that are difficult for her. The child is also concerned about the feelings of others and reacts empathetically to fellow students. Literature is an excellent vehicle for encouraging discussion about the feelings and needs of others. The lesson "We All Have Bad Days" is an example of a Cooperative Learning lesson that deals with feelings.

We All Have Bad Days

Objective: Children will recognize that all children have bad days and that bad feelings are not unique to them.

Procedure: The teacher reads the book *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst (Aladdin Books, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1972) to the class. The book tells of all the things that go wrong for Alexander on a very bad day. The teacher encourages students to share personal feelings about what might make a bad day.

Students are then grouped in pairs. Each pair thinks of five things that could make a bad day and writes them down or draws them. Both partners should agree on the five things that would make a bad day for them.

Group Processing: Partners share their ideas with the whole group.

Follow-Up: Partners make lists of things that would make a good day and share them with the class.

SUCCESS IN SCHOOL TASKS

Success in the academic, social, and physical tasks that the child undertakes is a crucial factor contributing to or detracting from the child's self-esteem. Whole group and paired group-building activities, when structured to result in student success, help promote these feelings of success. As the student experiences positive feelings in working with the class or a partner, self-esteem grows.

Other students can help the student feel successful. In some cooperative structures, the role of encourager is assigned to one student in the group. This student is responsible for saying positive things to others about their ideas, contributions, or efforts in the group. Group processing can also be designed to reinforce the success of each student in a completed activity. The lesson "We Can Do It!" is an example of building the feeling of success in children.

We Can Do It!

Objective: Children will identify skills and competencies that they already have.

Procedure: The teacher chooses one child who says, "I can . . . ," describing some action he or she can do, such as "tie my shoes," "bounce a ball," "smile at my friend," "zip up my jacket," etc. The child then demonstrates the action named. (With younger children, the teacher may need to suggest the actions that most can do and choose a child to perform each one.) Other students then do the action or raise their hands if they think they can do the action. The teacher should emphasize that everyone does not have to be able to do all of the actions.

Group Processing: Each student tells one thing he was able to do.

Individual Accountability: Each student draws a picture of something she is able to do well for a class bulletin board, booklet, or display.

IDENTIFYING AREAS OF PERSONAL STRENGTH AND INTEREST

Perhaps the greatest gift a teacher can give a child is the knowledge of a particular individual characteristic or skill that is an area of personal competency for the student. It is an irrefutable fact that some students possess talents and skills that are more numerous and easily identified than those of others, but every student has strengths that need to be nurtured and encouraged.

One of the premises of Cooperative Learning is that the combined talents and skills of group members are stronger than those of an individual. When talents and skills are merged into a group effort, the final group product is better than the individual product would be. In order for this assumption to work, each child must feel that he brings needed talents and skills to the group. Helping students identify such talents and skills is, therefore, necessary if each child is to be a successful member of a group. In the lesson "What's Your Talent?" students identify their individual talents.

What's Your Talent?

Objective: Students will identify individual talents or skills that they have.

Procedure: The teacher reads the book *Frederick* by Leo Lionni (Knopf 1967) to the class. Frederick is a mouse who appears to be lazy, but makes important contributions to his family through his poetry. After the story, the class is asked to identify the special talent Frederick had. The teacher then brainstorms a "talent list" with the whole group, listing all the different talents and skills the children can have.

Students are then placed in pairs. Each pair lists or draws one or more talents each believes her partner has.

Group Processing: Each pair shares the partners' talents with the whole group.

GROUP ACCEPTANCE

Glasser (1986) and many others have defined children's needs for belonging and acceptance as basic to their self-esteem. Beyond feeling merely safe and secure in the group, each child must also come to feel that she is accepted and cared for by other group members.

Children's early experiences with others color their future social relationships. This is a basic reason why early childhood classrooms need to be safe and caring places for young children to be. These early social contacts with others also help to shape each child's perception of who he is, how to get positive (or negative) attention from others, and how to contribute to the success of the group. The lesson "Student of the Day" helps promote the acceptance of children in the early childhood classroom.

Student of the Day
Carol Ann Lewis

Objective: Students will receive positive recognition from other class members.

Procedure: A student is selected by random draw or alphabetical order. The teacher then asks peers to dictate some information they know about the student (likes pizza, likes football, etc.) or a positive remark about the student (good colorer, helpful). The teacher records the statements on a large chart for all to read.

Working in pairs, each pair of students writes a friendly letter to the star student, including why they like or admire the person. The letter is accompanied by a picture. While the other students are working, the "Student of the Day" decorates a folder in which the letters and pictures can be saved.

Group Processing: Students share their letters and pictures with the Student of the Day.

CONTRIBUTING TO CLASS SUCCESS

The need for belonging and group acceptance also depends on the extent to which the child feels that he is an important part of the group. Too often, children bring "baggage" from past experiences in which parents, siblings, or neighborhood acquaintances have devalued their importance. The school setting provides an opportunity for all children, regardless of past experiences, to learn that they have important things to offer a group and that they are important.

Cooperative interaction in group activities provides the child with a chance to contribute to something bigger than herself. The opportunity to have ownership of a class project that is valued by the student and by her peers is an important self-esteem builder. The lesson "Class-a-Pede" is a class project that builds self-esteem.

Class-a-Pede

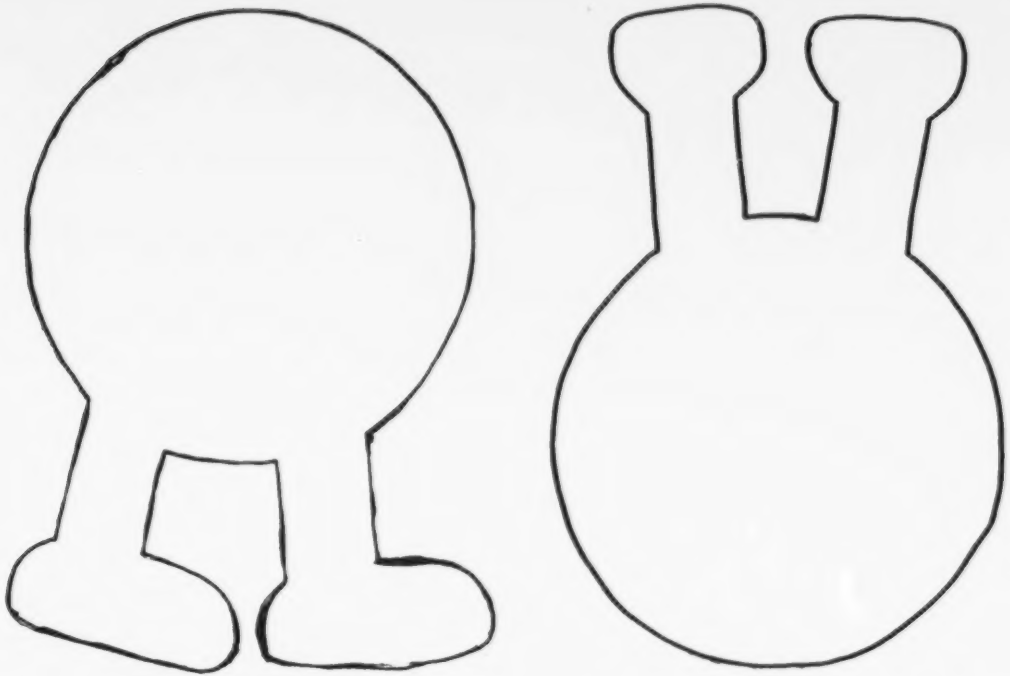
Objective: Working in pairs, students will construct part of a class art project.

Procedure: Students are grouped in pairs. The teacher distributes one copy of the Class-a-Pede body pattern (see Figure 6) to each student. Each student designs the feet and legs, including such features as toes, socks, and shoes as desired. Students then exchange Class-a-Pedes with their partners. Each student decorates the body of the Class-a-Pede that his partner has worked on. The decoration can be a design of the student's choice, a colorful design using the partner's name, drawings of what the partner likes to do, or a seasonal subject chosen by the teacher.

When completed, the partners' body parts are linked together with tape. The Class-a-Pede head can be designed by the teacher, or by a pair of students.

Group Processing: Each pair of body parts is connected to the head, and the final project is displayed. Students can discuss which parts they feel turned out especially well, or pairs can tell the whole group about the parts they designed.

Figure 6
Head and Body Part Pattern for Class-a-Pede



CONCLUSION

Individual self-esteem is a vital factor in mental health and in social relationships. Children with positive self-esteem are more likely to do well in school and to have enthusiasm for what they do. They are also more likely to relate well to peers and to adults.

Many children come to school having had limited or unhealthy opportunities for interaction with others. For some, this lack of opportunity and/or success makes the teacher's task even more difficult. As children come to see themselves as safe and secure in the classroom, they can begin to experience success in school activities. These successes can be used to help the children identify areas of personal interest and strength. As each child begins to feel successful and important, feelings of group acceptance and of contributing to the class are nurtured.

Cooperative Learning experiences provide positive opportunities for teachers to build student self-esteem developmentally. Many activities currently used by early childhood teachers can be easily adapted to Cooperative Learning and can be used to build the positive student self-esteem so necessary to future school success.

Chapter 4

SOCIAL SKILLS AND COOPERATIVE INTERACTION

> *There is nothing more basic than using one's knowledge in cooperative interaction with others.*
>
> —*Roger Johnson and David Johnson*

Developing a strong, positive sense of identity and the social skills needed to interact productively with others are reciprocal components in growth toward social competence. Katz (1988) defines social competence as the ability to develop and maintain satisfying relationships with others.

Relationships with peers can provide young children with opportunities to learn about themselves and get along with others. The foundation for this development of social skills is *trust*. Certain aspects of trust are apparent: trust develops over time through continuous interactions with people, and trust of others is based on others' abilities to meet one's needs in predictable and sensitive ways.

Friendships play an important role in trust building and social confidence. Young children who may have poor communication skills or are lacking in social skills may be rejected or ignored by their peers. Socially successful preschoolers interact with peers in cooperative ways. They initiate and respond to others in positive ways and receive, in turn, positive feedback in eye contact, smiles, and touching.

Children who are socially dysfunctional need assistance to break the recurring cycle of negative behaviors triggering the peer rejection that reinforces those negative behaviors. The years

of early childhood are "prime time" for intervening in this cycle and helping these children develop positive, appropriate social behaviors (Katz 1988).

Children who are unable to identify and follow the rules of the social group not only disrupt interactions, but also are apt to be judged socially *and* intellectually incompetent. The consequences of low peer acceptance may be more severe and far-reaching than the consequences of low achievement (Spodek, Saracho & Lee 1984). Early social adjustment in the primary grades seems to predict adult adjustment. Children who are socially isolated seem more prone to maladjustment, delinquency, and poor mental health.

As early childhood teachers face the diverse ethnic, social, and cultural backgrounds of our children, it is vitally important that they orchestrate experiences that promote positive social interactions. Learning to get along with a variety of peers, to experience mutual respect, and to value differences is imperative.

Early childhood teachers need to help children bridge their home-school experiences and assist them in accepting, in a positive way, others who are different because of race, culture, sex, language, handicapping conditions, family organization, and/or cognitive style. Valuing and supporting diversity must be a continual thread in the tapestry of an inclusive environment. When children feel valued for who they are, and when they are included as productive group members, trust and communication are enhanced. Cooperative, equal-status interaction among heterogeneous group members generates positive acceptance of similarities and differences (Slavin 1991).

COOPERATIVE INTERACTION

A number of research studies have found that Cooperative Learning fosters positive social attitudes and behavior. By celebrating the unique characteristics and valuing the contribution of each child in the group, early childhood educators can

build a positive sense of identity and the mutual trust necessary to engage in productive cooperative interactions.

The following lesson, "Cooperative Interview," can be used at the beginning of the school year. It provides opportunities for positive identity building, uses communication skills (speaking, listening), and serves as a trust-building process as well.

Cooperative Interview
Barbara Shafer

Objective: Students will find out information about their partners and be able to introduce their partners to the whole class.

Group Size: Partners.

Reward: Make a new friend.

Procedure: The teacher tells the children the following:

1. We are going to "interview" and introduce our partners.
2. Choose a place where you and your partner can sit and talk together.
3. Decide first who will get one piece of paper and one pencil.
4. Together make up five questions to ask about each other, and write the questions on your paper.
5. Each of you will "interview" the other by taking turns with your questions and writing your partner's answers on your paper.
6. I will observe and monitor as you work.
7. When you finish and *both* are ready to introduce your partner, sign your names on your piece of paper.
8. Introduce your partner to the class when the signal is given to stop interviewing each other.
9. Answer these questions together:
   a. What did we do well to get this job done?
   b. What could we do better next time?
10. Shake hands and say "thanks" to your partner.

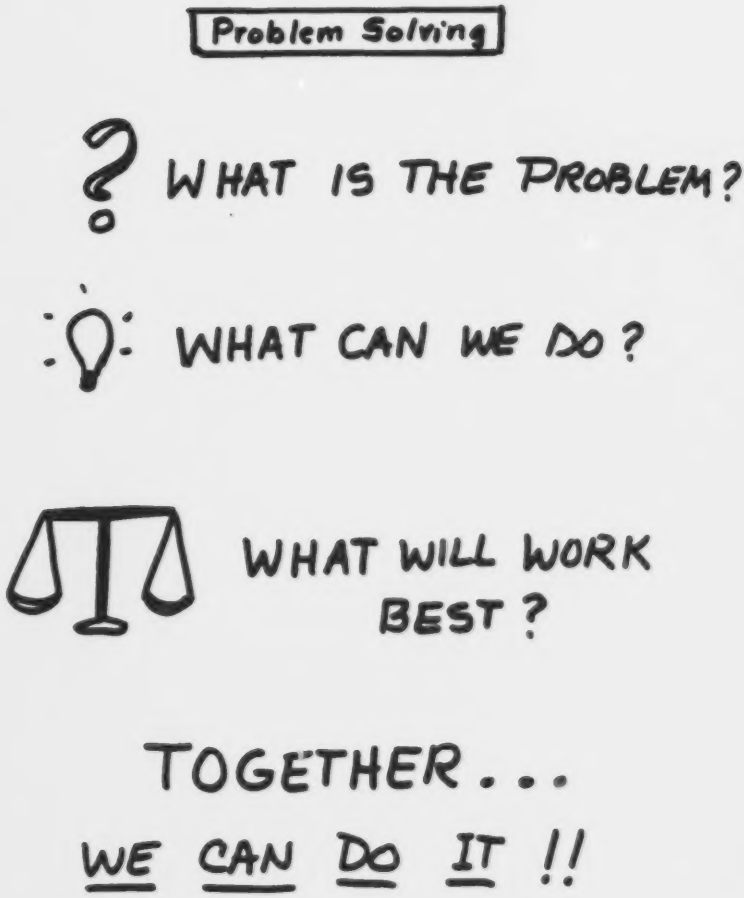
Young children need to become more sensitive to others' feelings and learn that others do not always share their viewpoints. Consideration of an alternative perspective requires a "decentering" process. The child moves from an egocentric posture to a decentric one in which the child views herself in relationship to others (Kamii & DeVries 1980; Spodek, Saracho & Davis 1991).

Cooperation demands decentering. As children have multiple opportunities to express ideas, negotiate with peers, and problem solve within a positive interactive structure, they will develop the self-confidence and peer trust necessary to acknowledge other perspectives.

Members of cooperative groups or pairs should be carefully selected to include a mixture of races, genders, cultures, learning styles, personalities, and handicapping conditions. After groups or pairs are selected, early childhood educators need to plan interdependent activities with high success rates and minimal adult supervision. Children are much more likely to disagree, air views, and negotiate when an adult is *not* an active force in the group. This is an opportune time for teachers to practice observational and monitoring/intervening skills, while resisting the temptation to be *too* helpful.

As communication skills and self-confidence build, children will gain understanding of the perspectives of others in their group. Expression, explanations, and conflict resolution by *all* members of the group should be encouraged. It may be necessary to "walk" children through the problem-solving process: identifying the problem, listening to suggestions from all members, considering all options offered, and agreeing on a solution together (see Figure 7). This takes time, but the dividends are well worth it. Working toward a common goal with a heterogeneous group of peers with minimal adult intervention is a socially and intellectually empowering experience for young children. It also creates a climate of mutual respect and inclusion. "I CAN" becomes "WE CAN."

Figure 7


Problem Solving
WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?
WHAT CAN WE DO?
WHAT WILL WORK BEST?
TOGETHER...
WE CAN DO IT !!

The following lesson—"Cooperative Cooking with Reading and Math Is Fun!"—is an example of an activity that has proved to be successful in a primary-level resource room populated with special needs children. Note that the teacher structured the team members' roles and the task sequence, but clearly gave full responsibility to the teams.

Cooperative Cooking with Reading and Math Is Fun!

Vicky Lorentz

Objective: Students will finish a sequenced task with a minimum of teacher involvement.

Group Size: Three.

Procedure:

1. The teacher places a Group Chart where the children can see it. The chart has team names with three numbered student names below each team name. For example:

GROUP CHART

Shining Chefs	*Best Bakers*	*Cool Cooks*	*Delicious Dudes*
1. George	1. Tom	1. John	1. Jim
2. Betty	2. Ann	2. Nancy	2. Jennifer
3. Lisa	3. Chris	3. Nathan	3. Thad

2. The teacher gives the following directions:
   a. Look at the Group Chart before you start.
   b. Look at your number.
   c. Do the jobs by your number in order, and put a check mark on the line in front of your number when the step is completed.
   d. Encourage others as they do their jobs.
   e. When you are finished complete the Cooperative Cooking Worksheet.
3. Hand each group a copy of the Jobs list as follows:

JOBS

____1. Spray the pans with nonsticking substance.
____2. Check to make sure the oven is on, and pick up your supplies at the supply area (cake mix, bowl, spoon, measuring cups/spoons, water, oil, eggs, and vanilla).
____3. Open box and dump cake mix into bowl.

____1. Pour one cup of water into the bowl.
____2. Pour in 1/3 cup of oil.
____3. Crack three eggs into a cup—one at a time. Check the eggs to make sure they are fresh. Pour into bowl.

____1. Mix 100 times using a spoon. (Members 2 and 3 count.)
____2. Mix 100 times using a spoon. (Members 1 and 3 count.)
____3. Mix 100 times using a spoon. (Members 1 and 2 count.)

____1. Add 1 tablespoon of vanilla—the secret ingredient.
____2. Ask the teacher to check your batter.
____3. Pour the batter into the pans.

____1. Take the batter to the baking area. Place the cake pans into the oven, and monitor the time. *You are responsible for watching the cake bake and taking it out when it is done!*
____2. Spray tables and chairs with a cleaner.
____3. Wipe tables and chairs off with a cloth.

____1. Get a towel, sponge, and soap. Take your dishes to the health room to wash.
____1/2/3. Now complete the Cooperative Cooking Worksheet.
____1/2/3. When you have completed your jobs sit down quietly at your desk and read.

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COOPERATIVE COOKING WORKSHEET

Date _____ Group Name _____

Please complete the following questions as a group. Pick the person who is oldest to be the writer. *All* group members must be able to answer all the questions before signing at the end.

1. What is the name of the cake mix? _____
2. What was the price of the cake mix? _____
3. What is the flavor of the cake mix? _____
4. How many ounces (oz.) are in the cake mix? _____
5. What did you add to the cake mix? List the items and prices below:

Item	*Price*
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

6. Now total all the prices. The total is _____
7. What is the total number of products used? _____
8. Write three ingredients in the cake mix:
   1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
9. How many calories are in one serving of the cake? _____
10. How much would five cake mixes cost? _____
11. What did your group do well? _____
    _____
12. What can your group do better next time? _____
    _____
13. Group members sign below when *everyone* in the group can individually answer *all* of the questions above.
14. Ask the teacher to quiz you on the answers.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

CONGRATULATIONS TEAMMATES!

Beyond carefully selecting heterogeneous group members, planning interdependent activities, and reducing adult control to a minimum, early childhood educators need to provide structured opportunities for learning social skills. Role-playing alternative actions in social situations and considering the consequences of those alternatives comprise an appropriate technique. Discussion and problem solving throughout the day in various interactive situations will provide adult-guided experiences as models for children.

Young children construct social values in the same way they construct knowledge. As they engage in repeated interactions with others, they internalize bits and pieces of those experiences and formulate relationships. Through social imitation and modeling, young children learn how to get along in society. Children's new knowledge about how others interact develops by their active modification of what they already know. This is a fluid and dynamic process, not a cumulative one such as laying bricks (Kamii & DeVries 1980).

However, the mere presence of children in a group does not guarantee cooperative interaction. It takes systematic, guided interaction to begin. Many experiences and the gradual reduction of adult intervention are needed as social skills develop. An example of this is found in the lesson "Cooperative Shapes."

Cooperative Shapes

Linda Post

This kindergarten lesson illustrates teacher-guided social skills development.

My first attempt at Cooperative Learning involved setting up three social guidelines: (1) use quiet voices, (2) share and take turns, and (3) no put-downs.

Since the children did not know what "put downs" were, I role-played a few situations for them, and then they, in their own words, decided that it meant to "make fun of someone." (I thought

that was pretty perceptive for five- and six-year-olds!) I role-played a pair working together, with another teacher, so the children had a concrete model. (Appropriate behavior and roles need to be modeled for young children.)

In this first cooperative activity, I decided to review the shapes we had covered so far. On large sheets of paper, I drew either a square, a triangle, a circle, or an ellipse in the center. Each group of three children had one paper, with a shape in the center, and one set of markers. Groups were randomly chosen, but I attempted to mix boys/girls and outgoing/shy in each group. The assignment was to turn each shape into a picture of something.

Prior to this assignment, during "circle time," I read a book about turning shapes into real "things" like a triangle into a clown hat.

As they began, I reminded the children again about the social skills I would be looking for, especially no put-downs. At first, the children sat shyly in their groups without interacting at all. (I wondered if I had forgotten something!) I approached one group and stimulated them by asking them what they thought they could make. I reminded them to think of the book I had read. One of the boys in the group offered that he could make the triangle into a truck. "That's a wonderful idea, Bobbie! What part of the truck could you make?" I asked. "I could put some wheels on," he answered.

"That's great! What part could Janie make?"

"Janie could put the road on."

"Janie, would you like to do that?"

"Okay."

As I was intervening with this group, I was aware of the other groups watching intently, so I "played it to the hilt." Now, the first group was taking the first tentative steps toward creating the project. It was not long before members of each group were talking about what they could create with their shape. I gave them sufficient time to finish their projects, collected the drawings, and then called each group to tell which part of the drawing each member had contributed (individual accountability).

SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

Young handicapped children especially need to develop positive social behaviors. They may display a range of problem behaviors from shy, withdrawn isolation from peers to hostile aggression toward them. Underdeveloped social skills and behavioral deficits lead to frustration, which triggers more negative behaviors (Spodek, Saracho & Lee 1984).

Special needs children can increase their social skills development by observing and interacting with regular needs children. *All* children become more sensitive to individual differences by developing early relationships with special needs children (Souweine, Crimmins & Mazel, 1981).

Cooperative Learning interactions help young children develop a positive group identity and a feeling of belonging, assist them in decentering and considering other perspectives, and foster acceptance of others who are different. As many positive experiences occur, children construct values and continually modify those values based on repeated experiences. Early childhood educators can provide the structure for these positive interactions in order to attain the goal of an inclusive social environment.

CONCLUSION

Young children can acquire social skills through modeling and teacher-guided experiences in cooperative groups. Repeated encounters with peers, in a positive interactive process, provide opportunities to grow toward decentering and the acceptance of others and their views. At the same time, self-confidence, group identity, and inclusion develop the trust necessary to continue growth in collaborative skills.

Chapter 5

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Speech is a mirror of the soul: as a man speaks, so is he.

—Publilius Syrus

Communicating effectively with others is a lifelong skill that begins at birth and is nurtured through the early childhood years. One of the social skills that Cooperative Learning enhances is that of communication. The child is self-centered and speaks of "I," "my," and "me." Through Cooperative Learning activities, the child can be helped to shift from this individual focus to group intercommunication.

Cooperative Learning builds communication skills in five ways:

1. Children have opportunities to listen to other children's ideas. (Listening skills are developed.)
2. Children have opportunities to share their ideas with others. (Speaking skills are developed or cultivated.)
3. Children learn to build on their own ideas by using the ideas of others.
4. Children learn to solve problems by communicating with others.
5. Children learn to use communication skills to evaluate the usefulness of ideas.

The child needs a structure that will not only allow personal thinking, but also encourage him to express that thinking in "I" comments, and then in "we" comments. In order to communicate effectively, children need to be able to express

themselves personally *and* to make that expression understandable to others without negative feedback. Sometimes, however, negative feedback will occur, regardless of the effectiveness of the communication. The emphasis should be on understanding others and being understood by them. The statement "I want this block!" with a simultaneous grabbing for the block is an example of the "me"-centered type of communication. On the other hand, "I want this block so that we can build a tower!" is a statement about oneself, but it also relates that self to others. In the early childhood years, the need is present to move the child from "me" to "we" communication skills.

UNFINISHED STORIES

The unfinished story is one technique that can be modified to enhance communication in a cooperative manner. Children are given stories without endings. Then individual children complete the story according to their own thinking. Cooperative Learning is a group activity, so this strategy must be adapted.

However, when a young child is individually confronted with an unfinished story, she may become frustrated, seeking the "best" ending, or she may become mentally "blank," not knowing what to put. The child seeking the "best" ending may have to choose between several endings and, thus, constantly seek the help of the teacher. "Teacher, which (ending) is better?" The teacher sometimes attempts to have the children think it through alone and come to a solution. A child who is "blank" may look around or listen to others to get an idea for an ending. As a consequence, whatever is written bears strong resemblance to another child's ending. In both cases, Cooperative Learning could assist the teacher.

Using Think-Pair-Share (Lyman 1981, 1987), two children can work as a pair on the unfinished story. They read the story out loud together. Speaking words aloud often generates

thoughts and ideas that reading silently does not. Then the pair discusses what might be a "good" ending for the story. After they have both verbalized their thinking, both children write out the ending of the story in their own individual words. Thus, the skills of reading, communicating, and writing are enhanced through the technique of two children working together. Partner editing would be a natural extension of the story writing. An example of an unfinished story lesson is the following one about "Abraham Lincoln and the Correct Change Incident."

Abraham Lincoln and the Correct Change Incident
(Unfinished Story)

Objective: The children will communicate their ideas to one another and then complete the story.

Grouping: Pairs.

Procedure: The teacher reads the unfinished story to the class. The children in their Think-Pair-Share groups discuss endings to the story. The children then explain or write their own endings. The teacher then tells the children what really happened.

The Story: Abe Lincoln, who once was a president of the United States, was well known for being an honest person. When he was growing up, he worked in a store. A customer bought something from Mr. Lincoln and left the store. Mr. Lincoln discovered that the customer had given him too much money for the purchase. What should Mr. Lincoln have done with the extra money that he had received from the customer?

After the children have finished the unfinished story, the children should be told that Mr. Lincoln walked a long way to the person's home and gave the person the correct change.

ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

In numerous classrooms today, children come to school with little or no ability to speak English. However, in order to

communicate effectively, either the English-speaking child must learn the non-English language or the non-English-speaking child must learn English. This simple statement is surrounded by social, economic, and political ramifications. However, communicating effectively is a key point here.

Children can be paired together—one child who speaks English with a child who is a non-English speaker. Where the number of English-speaking or non-English-speaking children is limited, the pairs can be shifted from content lesson to content lesson throughout the day.

During the activity, each child repeats what is said in the other child's language. For example, the teacher directs the children to pick up the pencil. In each pair, the English-speaking child says "pick up the pencil" and then picks up the pencil. The non-English-speaking child then picks up the pencil and says the same thing in his other language. The English-speaking child then picks up the pencil and repeats the other language. If the teacher is using a language other than English and the majority of the children are non-English speakers, the process would be reversed. The lesson "Help Mr. Peanut Solve the Problems" illustrates this approach.

Help Mr. Peanut Solve the Problems

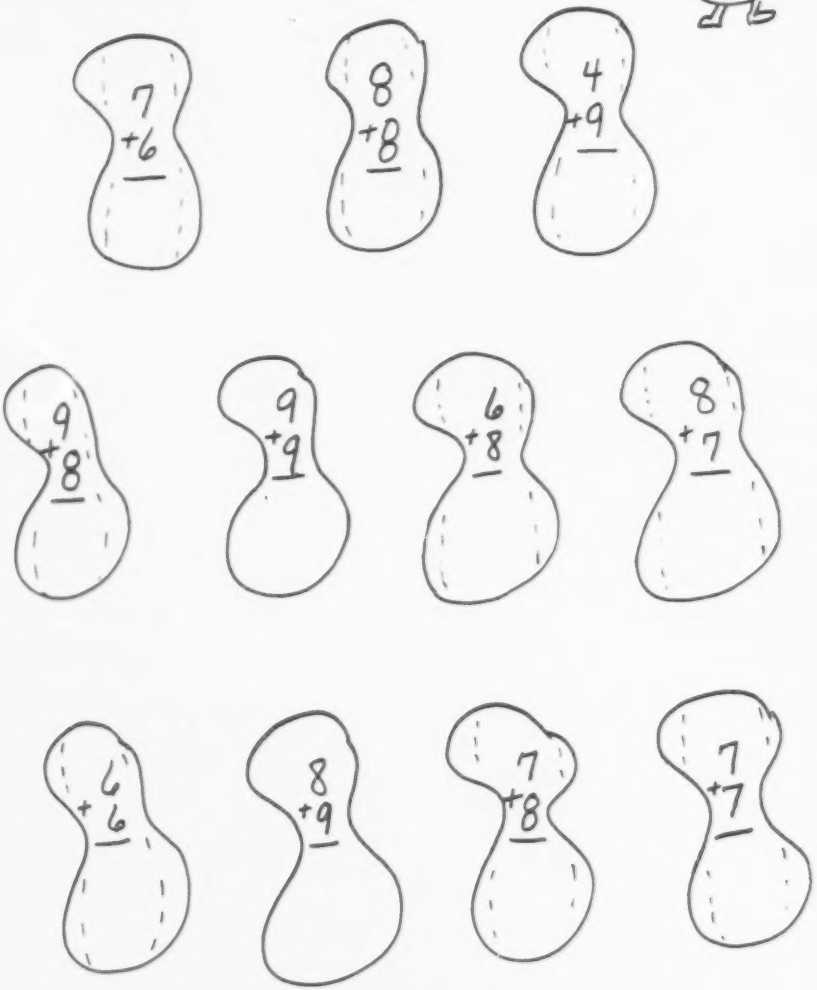
Melanie Smith

During classroom activities, children would proceed through the lesson activities. In a lesson on addition by single digits up to 18 in the first grade, the teacher hands out the Mr. Peanut addition practice sheet, which has addition problems within a peanut shape. (See Figure 8.) The teacher states, "Help Mr. Peanut solve the problems." The children repeat this title/direction in both English and the other language. The teacher states, "Pick up your pencil." The children repeat the teacher's words in both languages, while picking up their pencils. The teacher then states, "Place your pencil point on the first peanut." This is repeated by the children. The teacher states, "Seven plus six equals what number?" This is repeated by the children. The pairs of children decide on the solution together. Then the individual children write the solution on their individual practice papers. Next the children state the number in both English and the other language.

During the course of this exchange, pairs of children are assisting each other in mathematics, but they are also learning another language at the same time, thus learning to communicate more effectively.

Figure 8
Help Mr. Peanut Solve the Problems

Name _____



Young children often have difficulty with spatial relationships. What does it mean to be "above," "below," or "on"? The lesson "Feed the Turkey," in addition to practicing counting and learning about spatial relationships, has young children orally rehearsing their concepts of spatial relationships and developing their repertoire of words. Direction following is important to this lesson as well, but will be treated in the next section.

Feed the Turkey

Objective: Children will practice counting skills in pairs. Children will practice spatial relationship vocabulary words (on, off, above, below. . .) in pairs.

Materials: Drawing of a turkey (see Figure 9), five construction paper cutouts of corn or candy corn.

Note: During the activity, each pair of children should have only one turkey and five corn pieces to share. Each child may later be given a turkey to color if desired.

Procedure: Tell the children that they will be working in pairs to feed the turkey to fatten it for Thanksgiving dinner. The teacher will tell the children how many pieces of corn to give the turkey each time they feed it. They will take turns feeding the turkey by putting corn pieces on the drawing. Their partners will check to see that they have the correct number of corn pieces.

1. one piece of corn
2. three pieces of corn
3. two pieces of corn
4. no pieces (The turkey is not feeling well.)
5. five pieces of corn
6. four pieces of corn

To practice vocabulary words:

1. one piece on the turkey
2. two pieces off the turkey
3. one piece on, one piece off
4. two pieces on, two pieces off

5. three pieces on, one piece off
6. two pieces on, three pieces off

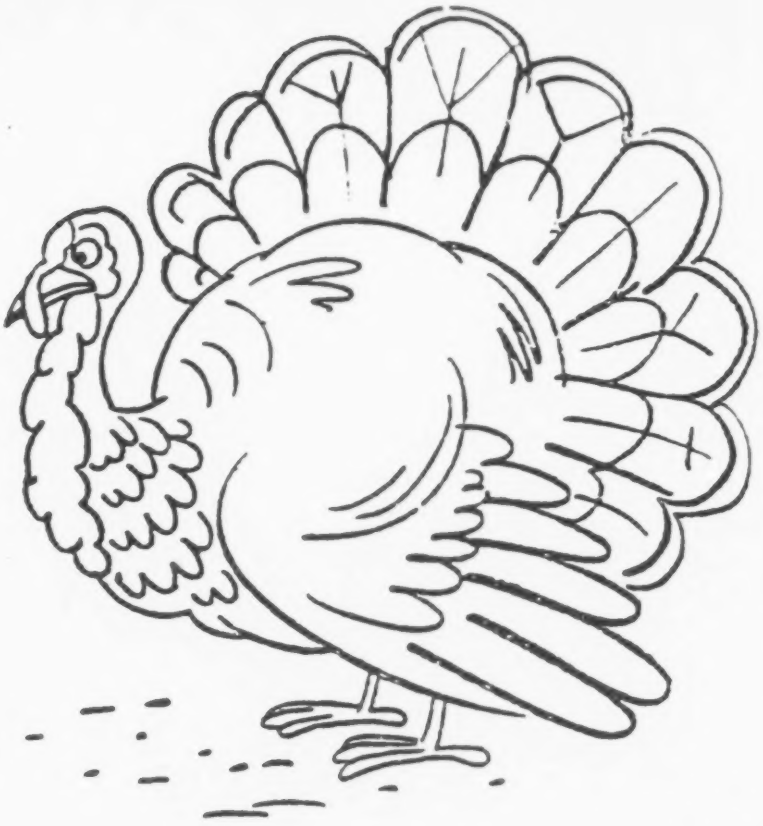
(Change the order of the words.)

7. three pieces off the turkey, one piece on the turkey
8. four pieces off, one piece on
9. one piece off, no pieces on
10. no pieces off, two pieces on

"Above" and "below" may be substituted for "on" and "off." Example: one piece of corn above the turkey, one below (meaning one at the top of the turkey picture and one at the bottom of the turkey picture, but not within the outline of the turkey).

Group Reward: Candy corn or cornbread can serve as a reward to be eaten following the activity.

Figure 9



DIRECTION FOLLOWING

One form of communication that teachers continuously use is that of direction giving and direction following. Children need to learn very early that following directions is extremely important. Whether the children follow those directions precisely is another problem altogether.

The lesson "Parts of a Flower" can be used during the spring season and indicates the importance of communication and direction following within the cooperative setting.

Parts of a Flower
(Spring)
Lori Skolnick

Goal: The children will follow directions, individually and as a group.

Objective: The children will work cooperatively and collaboratively, making a group spring mural by following specific teacher directions.

Process Skills: Cooperating, communicating, explaining, identifying, listening, and counting.

Grouping: Groups of four. The teacher makes cards prior to the lesson. On one side of the card is a number from 1 to 4, and on the other side of the card is a flower type. The numbers determine which team member performs each task.

Procedure: This lesson uses the leap frog Cooperative Learning approach.

Child 1 will go up to the teacher and obtain the first set of directions. The teacher states, "Give each person in your group a piece of paper and tell each one to cut out a stem for a flower."

The child gets materials and takes them to the group. The child then relays the teacher's directions to the group, and the group members follow the child's directions.

The teacher monitors all groups and checks on their progress. When the majority of the children have completed the task, the

teacher calls up child 2 and states the following, "Go and get two leaves for each person in your group and have them cut them out." Child 2 gets the materials and relays the directions to the group.

Child 3 is called by the teacher. The teacher states, "Get enough flowers for each member of your group. Ask your friends what color each one would like." The teacher pauses to allow child 3 to complete this set of directions before giving the next set of directions to child 3. The teacher tells child 3, "Tell your team members that they are to glue their flowers onto their stems." Child 3 relays the directions to the group.

Child 4 is called by the teacher. The teacher states, "Have your group glue their flowers on the paper—first, the flower with the stem and, second, the leaves." Child 4 gets the background paper and relays the directions to the group.

Child 1 is called by the teacher. The teacher states, "Ask your group whether or not they would like to add anything else to their beautiful picture." Child 1 carries the directions to the group. If the group decides to add something, then child 2 can be in charge of getting any additional materials that are needed.

Cleaning up of the materials and returning them to the correct location are the tasks of children 3 and 4. Once the area is cleaned up, each group shares its mural with the class. With a prekindergarten class or a kindergarten class with a high percentage of non-English-speaking children, each child from the group should say something about the mural.

A Halloween project can be a context for direction following on the part of young children. In the lesson "Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwiches," the children not only hear a teacher read a story, but also make a Halloween peanut butter and jelly sandwich by following the teacher's interesting directions.

Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwiches
(Halloween)
Jan Morehead

Objective: The children will become aware of the importance of following directions while thinking logically and sequentially in order to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Grouping: Groups of four. The teacher assigns four different jobs to each group. Each group will be responsible for making a sandwich. Some groups will be responsible for distributing the finished product, plus other related snack items.

Anticipatory Set: The teacher reads the book *The Giant Jam Sandwich* to the class. The teacher leads a discussion about what would be needed to make a sandwich, especially a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Sandwich-Making Roles:

- Baker: Brings the supply tub to the group; opens and removes the bread from a package of bread.
- Spreader: Spreads the peanut butter on the bread.
- Jammer: Spreads the jelly.
- Slicer: Puts the bread slices together in sandwich form and cuts it into four pieces.

Table Helper Roles:

- Mouth Cleaner: Passes out napkins.
- Milk Person: Passes out milk.
- Sipper: Passes out straws.
- Munchy Muncher: Passes out sandwiches.

Input: As a whole group, the teacher has the children give verbal directions for making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. The teacher writes the directions on the chalkboard or chart paper. When the list is completed, the teacher makes the sandwich according to the children's directions. (If the children say to put the peanut butter on the bread, then the teacher puts the jar of peanut butter on the unopened package of bread, and so on.) The teacher

talks about the importance of thinking logically, doing things in sequential order, following directions, and making decisions. The teacher passes out job necklaces to four children (see Figure 10), assigning one of the sandwich roles to each child. The class is then asked to restate the directions for the sandwich in a logical and sequential order.

Guided Practice: Four children come to the front of the classroom to act as role models. The teacher has assigned jobs according to the corresponding necklaces. The teacher talks to the entire class about the importance of thinking logically, doing things in sequential order, following directions, and making decisions. Safety rules are talked about in regard to opening jars of food and using a knife. The class is asked to restate the directions. The teacher writes each new direction on the board as one child demonstrates that direction as a role model. The teacher can compare the original directions with the new directions.

Independent Practice: Cooperative Learning groups of four are formed. Each group is given four necklaces with differing pictures on them. The job pictures include a peanut butter jar, a jelly jar, a slice of bread, and a knife (see Figure 11). Each group member has previously been assigned a number (1–4). The teacher assigns a number to each picture. The children can then determine what each job will be and begin making the sandwich. (The teacher has previously placed all the supplies in a tub. The supplies include small containers of peanut butter and jelly, two slices of bread, a plastic knife, and a sheet of waxed paper.)

Closure: Table helpers can be assigned the job of distributing the snacks. These jobs can be randomly assigned by the teacher. Job necklaces assign the various roles. (Another variation would be to pass out four different jobs to each group of four.) Stick puppets might be made for each picture. Each puppet can be held up in the air, one at a time, and everyone with that job can pick up the appropriate items from the tub and pass them out to the table group members. (Separate items may be kept in separate tubs—i.e., bread in the bread tub, etc.)

Group Evaluation:

1. Elicit verbal responses from the children.
2. Make a word web using the vocabulary words: peanut butter,

jelly, knife, bread, spread, and so on (see Figure 12).

3. Review the directions, comparing the first set to the second set.
4. Discuss how important it is to follow directions, not only during this lesson, but always.
5. Ask how the children liked their sandwiches.

Note: This activity was done originally during the week of Halloween. The food products and equipment were renamed, using Halloween vocabulary words (see Figure 13). In addition, the directions were sent home for the parents to enjoy. The children can come up with their own names for each item used and each role carried out.

Figure 10

Figure 11

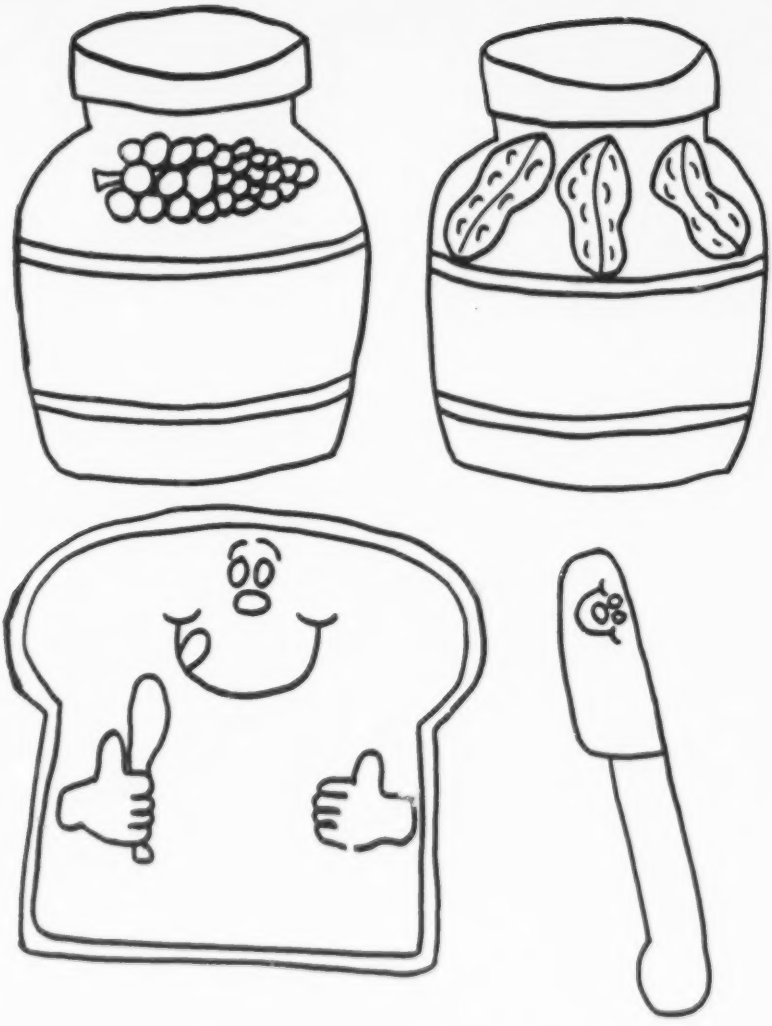


Figure 12

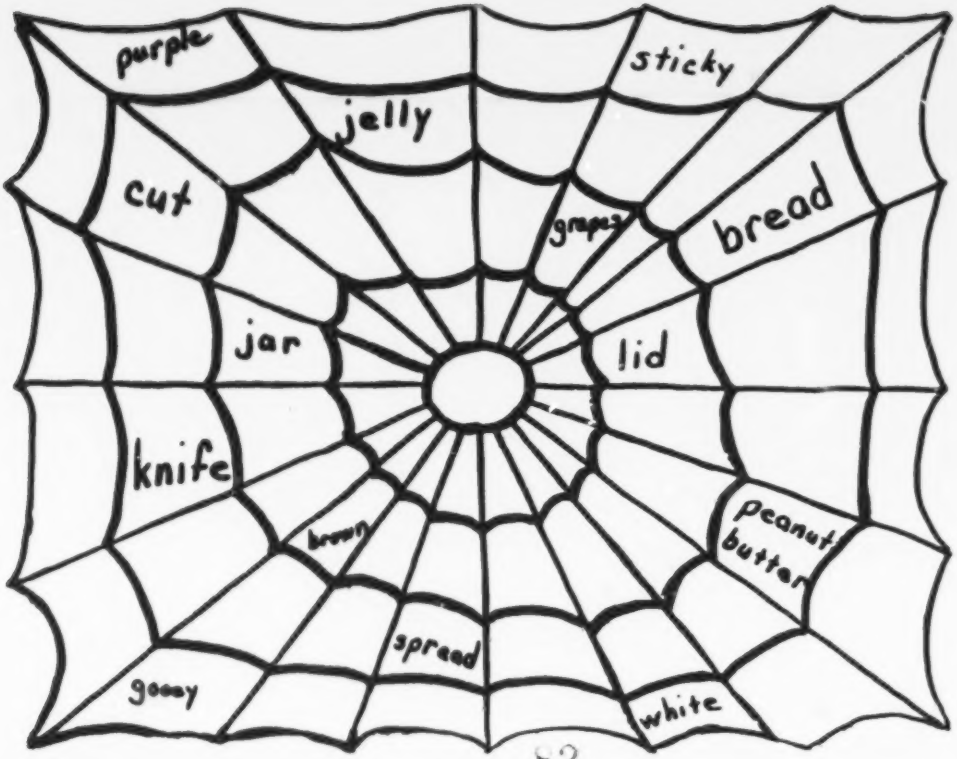
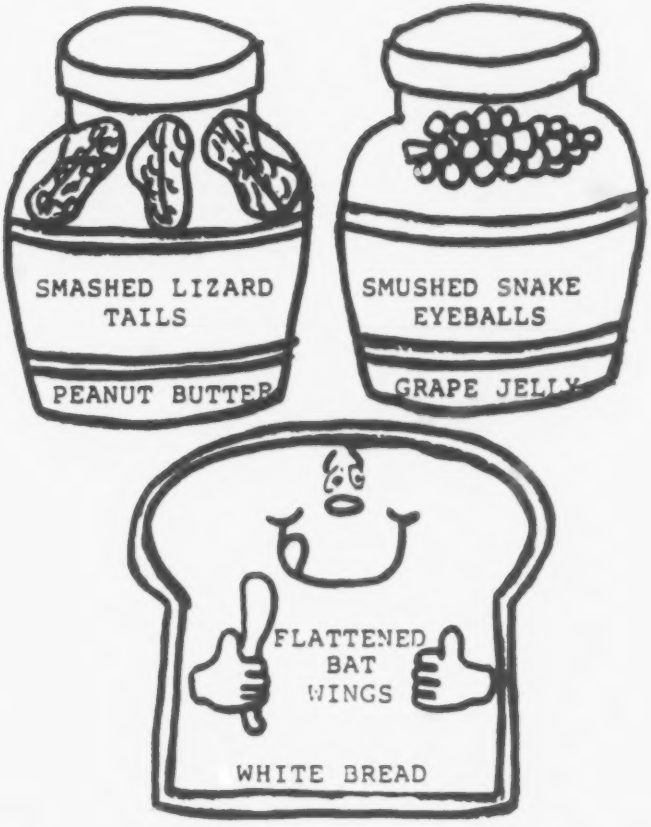

purple
jelly
sticky
cut
grapes
bread
jar
lid
knife
brown
peanut butter
spread
gooey
white

Figure 13


SMASHED LIZARD TAILS
PEANUT BUTTER
SMUSHED SNAKE EYEBALLS
GRAPE JELLY
FLATTENED BAT WINGS
WHITE BREAD

SHARING TEAMS

Most teachers have had Show & Tell and have had it turn into Drag & Brag. The children drag something into the room and go on about how great their favorite "whatever" is and how they love it so much. This may draw limited attention from other children who want to talk about their favorite item. Cooperative Learning can change this large-group setting, which can cause hurt feelings, into one of mutual concern and listening.

Sharing teams, developed by Lyman, Foyle, and Thies, is a simple Cooperative Learning structure that allows children to share ideas while practicing roles and developing listening skills. Teams can have three or four members who rotate the following roles:

- Sharer: Tells the group her response to an idea or question.
- Stretcher: Asks one or more questions to get more information from the sharer.
- Applauder: Tells one or more things he liked about what the sharer or the stretcher said. (Groups of four have two applauders.)

A time limit for the sharer should be given. Short time limits of two to four minutes are appropriate when beginning. Later, longer sharing times can be given, if desired.

After each team member has shared, the team members can write about their sharing. The topic sentence can be "Today, our group talked about. . . ." The roles of writer (writes the ideas of the group), teller (tells what should be written), and checker (checks for completeness, grammar, and punctuation) can be used for the writing activity.

For prewriting four- and five-year-olds, sharing pairs of children could replace groups. The pairs could generate a sentence to dictate for a Sharing Chart. The chart might be labeled "SHARE PAIRS CHART" and have the words "Today

We Shared . . ." on the first line. Then the children's names could be listed in the following way:

- Mike shared his (in the space Mike draws what he shared).
- Susie told me about her (in the space Susie draws what she told).

SHARING TEAMS STARTERS

Listening in the sharing teams can be enhanced by using one or more of the following sharing teams starters. The children start their statements with "What I like to do best is. . . ." This provides the children with some structure in their sharing time. Active involvement of all children is encouraged. Following are some possible sharing teams starters:

1. What I like to do best is. . . .
2. What I like about school is. . . .
3. School could be better if. . . .
4. Something really fun I did was. . . .
5. Things I like to see [hear, taste, feel, smell] are. . . .
6. Something that makes me happy is. . . .
7. My favorite food is. . . .
8. A good friend is. . . .
9. Hot weather [cold, snow, rain] makes me feel like. . . .

(Negatives may be introduced after trust has been built in the classroom. Some negative statements might include the following.)

10. Something that bugs me is. . . .
11. Something that scares me is. . . .
12. Something that makes me angry is. . . .

THINKING OUT LOUD TOGETHER, SHARING (TOTS)

Children are self-centered and do not share "why" they choose to do or say something. This can be alleviated by fostering communication between children in a spoken manner. One way to do this is by following the thinking out loud together, sharing (TOTS) approach developed by Foyle, Lyman, and Thies.

TOTS combines the cognitive and affective domains. In the cognitive domain, the process includes five steps (thinking out loud together):

1. *Wondering:* The child thinks about what the teacher presented.

   "I want to know. . . ."

2. *Telling:* The child verbalizes or orally rehearses that wondering/thinking to others.

   "I want to tell others about what I know."
   "I want to tell others about what I think."

3. *Listening:* The child attends to or listens to the ideas of others. This listening is a form of showing respect for others.

   "I want to know what others think."

4. *Building:* The child restates the other child's telling and attempts to add to it by improving on it.

   "We have a good idea."

5. *Evaluating:*

   "This is a good idea because. . . ."
   "We did a good job because. . . ."

In the affective domain, the process includes the following five steps (sharing):

1. *Motivating:*

   "I need to know. . . ."

2. *Sharing:* Learning by teaching each other; oral rehearsal; peer practice.

   "I have a good idea. . . ."

3. *Accepting:* Individual attention; listening.

   "My friends have a good idea. . . ."

4. *Liking (self-esteem):*

   "I like myself and others. . . ."

5. *Celebrating (evaluating):*

   "We work well together because. . . ."

Young children not only need to achieve success in the cognitive domain, but especially need to achieve success in the affective domain. Young children need to verbalize (thinking out loud together) and to actually use social skills (sharing). An additional reason for young children to verbalize is that oral language is a concept-building tool. The task of preschoolers, kindergartners, and even primary students is to shift from concrete and action-stimulus-bound thought to an internalized action—a mental construct that can be referred to without repeating the action or events externally over and over again. The next lesson, "The Block Tower," uses manipulatives to illustrate the TOTS approach.

The Block Tower
(A Thinking Out Loud Together, Sharing or TOTS Approach)

Objective: Communication will be enhanced as each child expresses what she is thinking while making a block tower.

Grouping: Teams of two.

Process: As children work together, they verbalize why they are doing something. The teacher helps the children go through this process. Any activity can be substituted for building a tower.

1. Child 1: "I want to know how high we can pile these blocks." (Wondering)
2. Child 1: "I think we should put the first block here." (Telling)
3. Child 2: He pays attention to child 1, who is talking. (Listening)
4. Child 2: "That's a good idea. Let's put the next block here because it will. . . ." (Building)
5. Child 1: "I think the next block should go here because. . . ."
6. And so on. Each child helps build the blocks up while stating what she is thinking or doing.

MANIPULATIVES

The lesson "The Block Tower" uses manipulatives. Early childhood teachers recognize the importance of using objects that provide hands-on experiences for young children. These objects are called *manipulatives.* Manipulatives provide many opportunities for children to be actively involved in cooperative interaction with others. Some cooperative strategies that utilize manipulatives are

- Cooperative counting: Children practice counting skills, using a variety of objects, in teams of two or more.
- Cooperative sorting: Children sort objects by color, shape, size, texture, or other attributes in teams of two or more.

- Cooperative constructing: Children build a structure or put a puzzle together in teams of two or more. One set of materials should be used that leads to one finished product.
- Cooperative listening: Children arrange one set of objects by following auditory directions given by the teacher in teams of two or more.
- Cooperative shaping: Children arrange one set of objects in the shape of given shapes, letters, or numbers in teams of two or more.

A variety of objects lend themselves to use as manipulatives for these cooperative strategies (see Figure 14). Having only one set of materials to be shared (by a team or pair) is very important in order to promote positive interdependence.

Figure 14
Selected Manipulative Objects

Item	Description and Use	Manufacturer
Barrel of Monkeys	14 plastic monkey shapes with tails used to connect them	Milton Bradley Company
Blockhead	24 wooden blocks in a variety of shapes and colors	Pressman Toy Corporation
Jumbo Pick-Up Stix	24 sticks in 4 colors	Rose Art Industries
Magnetic Shapes	10 shapes in 6 colors	Tootsietoy Corporation
Parquetry Blocks	32 blocks in 3 shapes and 6 colors	Learning Resources
Super Shapes Monsters	Pasta monster shapes, which can be colored to make them easier to tell apart	Mueller (Best Foods)

CONCLUSION

Communication goes beyond speaking to one another. It is the sharing of ideas and the understanding of others. Cooperative Learning uses communication skills, and the growth of these skills is at the heart of the interactive process. When understanding is communicated well, true cooperation can occur. Young children can learn this process through oral language development, sharing teams, and the use of manipulatives within Cooperative Learning groups.

Chapter 6

COOPERATION AND PLAY

Play is a particularly powerful form of activity that fosters the social life and constructive activity of the child.

—Jean Piaget

Play is a major vehicle for enabling children to learn about their world. It is a channel for exploring, for testing the limits of their environment, for engaging their minds in new patterns of thought, and for devising alternative actions. During play, children can master basic concepts and skills. They can express ideas or feelings, construct new knowledge, and develop oral language as they interact with objects and people.

The *process* of play activity—not the product—is significant. Play is characterized by its self-directedness, active involvement, and intrinsic motivation *to satisfy self* rather than to meet basic survival needs or adult demands.

Children's play has been the subject of much study. Some principles that emerge as common denominators in the findings are that (1) play is child-directed, child-initiated, and child-involved; (2) play is autonomous of external goals; (3) play occurs when basic needs are met and the child feels secure; (4) play is fun; and (5) play supports and enhances all areas of development.

There are several theories about the stages and types of play. Researchers usually differentiate between "free" play and "teacher-guided" play. These two forms of play differ in the level of adult control. Stage theories vary, but most indicate an initial, motor-oriented play stage from infancy to about two years of age. During this time, children practice and refine motor skills and are egocentric in their behavior. These experiences form the basis

for other forms of play, social interactions, and oral language development. This isolated play enables children to distinguish themselves as separate from their surroundings and their actions as affecting events in their world.

A second stage, toddler to about three years old, generally depicts play that is parallel (side by side) without purposeful interaction between players. This is the forerunner of cooperative play. Teacher encouragement to interact and share play materials with peers and adult dialogue with toddlers about others' needs and feelings lay the foundation for cooperative behaviors.

Associative or cooperative play begins when children can decenter enough to interact in collaborative ways while playing. This can occur in socially skilled three-year-olds or perhaps not until well into the primary grades for a child with few social experiences. The task of educators of young children is to know when to intervene in play, to know how to structure the play environment for maximum autonomy, and to know the children well enough to do all this with their appropriate developmental needs in mind.

THE TEACHER'S ROLE IN COOPERATIVE PLAY

By encouraging autonomy and intervening only when necessary to stimulate conversation or to model appropriate social behavior, the teacher can promote cooperative play and enrich social interactions. The purpose is to support the children and minimize adult control as much as possible so that the play process is child-initiated and child-satisfying. Children learn to be interdependent with peers much more quickly with minimal adult involvement (Spodek, Saracho & Davis 1991).

Planning for flexible spaces, materials, and time frames within a secure, predictable environment will provide an appropriate framework for play. Children's play ideas can be stimulated by a diversity of literature experiences, field trips, pets, centers, and access to interesting people in the classroom.

The teacher's role changes slightly if the children are playing organized games, but the need to support independence is still important. This may mandate "walking" through the problem-solving process and spending lots of time discussing what to do about peer conflicts—even if this limits the actual play time. Reduced adult intervention encourages cooperation among the children and allows them to build competence as negotiators and cooperative problem solvers. Games may need to be modified to be compatible with young children's thinking. They can become frustrated and have negative experiences when rules are imposed on them by an adult or older children.

Adults need to keep in mind that autonomy and independent thinking are the goals of play activities. It is the young children's play—*their* games and *their* competence—that needs the time to grow. Early childhood teachers can become overly concerned with the adult interpretation of "success" in these play activities.

An example of the difference in young children's thinking during games is cited by Kamii and DeVries (1980): "When four-year-olds run a race, everybody can win. When they play Hide and Seek, a hider often yells, 'Here I am, come and find me!' In a guessing game, a player often gives the answer away and others do not object to this" (p. 202). As in other activities, play and games must be compatible with the child's developmental needs and abilities. Early childhood teachers will reap tremendous, continuing benefits if preschoolers and kindergartners experience productive cooperative play.

BENEFITS OF COOPERATIVE PLAY

As in Chapter 1, in the discussion of an appropriate curriculum, the central consideration must always be appropriately meeting children's needs, whatever the activity may be. Play promotes development in all areas: physical, social, emotional, and cognitive. This is especially true when the play is cooperative

and other children's actions and thoughts impact the players.

Physical activity and the development of fine and gross motor skills are an obvious part of play, especially in outdoor activities. Whether the play is inside or outside, children are *actively involved*, which is a basic learning prerequisite for young children. The *self-concept* is enhanced as young children gain confidence (self-efficacy) in what they can accomplish independently of adults. Pride in their accomplishments, individual or cooperative, is a positive experience. As children are encouraged to choose activities and invent their own play processes, they have control over the environment and sense a responsibility for their activity. Creativity and flexibility of action and thought are direct cognitive growth benefits. Situations, problems, and solutions are ingeniously arranged, developed, and solved during play.

The decentering process allows children to entertain others' viewpoints. This movement away from egocentrism is a major factor in the ability to *construct knowledge* and modify it as new experiences occur. Piaget calls this "confrontation of points of view" and emphasizes its importance to the assimilation/accommodation cycle of cognitive development: "It is clear that the confrontation of points of view is already indispensable in childhood for the elaboration of logical thought . . . [He commends study] . . . on such an important terrain as play, where the confrontation of points of view is constantly at work" (quoted in Kamii & DeVries 1980, vii).

The child constructs knowledge of her environment and continually modifies that knowledge based on play experiences—exploration and experimentation with objects and people. External actions are internalized through the channel of language. Eventually, the objects and actions are not necessary for the child to think about the concepts; they have been internally "filed" for retrieval as needed.

Wehman & Umansky (1985) reported four values of play for handicapped children. Play helps achieve educational goals; develops gross and fine motor, language, and social skills; reduces

socially unacceptable behavior; and provides enjoyment.

Educators of young children have long known the value of cooperative play in the acquisition of *appropriate social behaviors.* When children learn to decenter and see other viewpoints, they are able to adapt their behavior to be compatible with social situations. Learning to share, to negotiate, and to problem solve helps the child compromise, when necessary, in the best interest of the peer group. These adaptive behaviors are positively influenced in special needs as well as regular needs children.

The direct effect of cooperative play on the social behaviors of special needs children is evident. It teaches them acceptable modes of socialization, such as sharing, taking turns, and being responsible. Also, during play there is a reduction or elimination of aggressive behavior and bizarre vocal sounds (Wehman & Umansky 1985).

The benefits of play are multiple, and the relationship of skills acquired to later learning success is evident. A closer look at the actual implementation of cooperative learning built on cooperative play experiences is the final piece of this puzzle.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND COOPERATIVE PLAY

A primary goal in Cooperative Learning is the development of positive interdependence among group members as they interact to succeed at a task and evaluate their own performance. The essential communication and social skills necessary for success in Cooperative Learning are practiced and refined during cooperative play. The benefits of cooperative play, previously cited, combine to produce increased social and intellectual competence, which enables children to learn effectively in a cooperative group.

During play, children invent guessing games with a hidden object, and playmates guess its location or description.

Hints are given (generously) until someone is successful at finding the object. Building on this play format, a first grade teacher can use a low-level "trivia" game format and put children into heterogeneous groups of three. Each group sits closely around one desk so that they can confer before giving their group answer to the trivia question. Each team has a Scorekeeper, an Encourager, and a Speaker. (The Encourager makes sure that each member has input and that all agree on the answer given by the Speaker.) After all the groups attempt a particular question without giving the right answer, the teacher answers it and puts it back in the stack to be asked again. After the game, the children work together to evaluate their individual effectiveness and their group teamwork. Questions they used included "Do we all help answer questions?" "What makes us a really good team?" and "What could we do to work together better next time?"

DRAMATIC PLAY

Dramatic play is a natural occurrence for young children in the playhouse area. Sociodramatic play (pretending to be persons from your social circle and "trying on" different roles) is not scripted in advance and is usually quite impromptu. Teacher-directed role-play is defined by specific characters/events. Scripted lines may even be used. For example, The Three Billy Goats Gruff may be re-enacted with a table as the bridge, children as the goats and the troll, and the audience as the sound effects makers (slapping their hands on their thighs and saying "trip-trap" with the appropriate volume for each size goat). The Little Red Hen can be role-played with groups of children saying the lines for the cat, duck, mouse, and other characters.

Children might also select parts of stories to pantomime or role-play. The following lesson was contributed by a teacher whose goal was to use dramatic play to enhance reading comprehension.

Girls Can Be Anything
Mary McDonnell Harris

The story used in this lesson is *Girls Can Be Anything* by Norma Klein (E. P. Dutton, 1975). The story develops in parts or episodes. An episode is action that takes place at one time and place. The episodes are as follows:

Episode 1: Adam and Marina play hospital. Adam is doctor.
Episode 2: Marina and her father discuss her Aunt Rosa, a surgeon.
Episode 3: Marina plays doctor and confronts Adam.
Episode 4: Adam and Marina play airplanes. Adam is pilot; Marina is stewardess.
Episode 5: Marina and her mother discuss a female pilot.
Episode 6: Adam and Marina play airplanes; both are pilots.

In interpreting a story dramatically, it seems best to develop only one episode, unless all the episodes are the same, as in The Gingerbread Boy. In the case of *Girls Can Be Anything*, parallel episodes 4 and 6 were chosen for dramatic interpretation. Episode 4 was much better developed in the story and provided more dramatic possibilities; the dramatization of episode 6 was essential to the theme of the story.

Preparation for reading a story that will be interpreted dramatically often includes a dramatic warm-up. This is very useful in helping children begin to identify with the story situation and to predict character actions and reactions. In preparation for reading *Girls Can Be Anything*, each child pantomimed a job he or she might like to do as a grown-up. The teacher led a discussion about whether certain jobs were only for men or only for women in the context of their selections.

The lesson sequence was as follows:

1. Preparation for reading
   a. Dramatic warm-up
   b. Discussion of sex-linked careers
   c. Introduction of story characters/vocabulary
2. Silent reading/discussion
   a. Episodes 1, 2, and 3

3. Silent reading/dramatic interpretation of episode 4
   a. Chairs moved into an airplane to establish setting
   b. Silent reading/discussion
   c. Character selection
   d. Dramatic interpretation
4. Silent reading/discussion
   a. Episodes 5 and 6
5. Dramatic interpretation of episode 6

Lesson time: about 45 minutes.

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS

Songs and fingerplays are often done cooperatively. Partners can do collaborative motions, and groups can sing the parts of simple rounds like "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." By tightening the structure a bit, roles can be devised for some of these activities. A cooperative strategy for using music with young children is to break the song down into phrases and have as many people in the group as there are phrases in the song. For very young children, even a section of a song is almost always too much for an individual to carry alone vocally. An example of this would be the song "This Old Man." The following music lesson is an example of cooperative roles and positive interdependence built into a singing activity.

This Old Man
(Music)
Susan B. Lyman

In "This Old Man," the first phrase of the song is "This old man, he played one." The second phrase is "He played nick-nack on my thumb." The third phrase is "With a nick-nack, paddy-whack give the dog a bone!" The fourth phrase is "This old man came rolling home."

Because there are four phrases in this song, there could be four people in each group. Each person would sing just one phrase of

the song and do only the actions for the phrase that is sung. If all ten verses of "This Old Man" are used, the teacher may stop between verses and assign new parts so everyone learns all the parts.

By singing cooperatively, children quickly realize that without each person's participation, the song will not sound right or be complete. Cooperation will also make singing like a game as the children put the parts together to form a complete whole.

It takes a good deal of planning and careful orchestration for teachers to provide stimulating play environments with minimal adult control. But the dividends from acquiring the basic skills needed to succeed in Cooperative Learning interactions with peers are tremendously valuable. Major benefits can be realized when teaching styles are changed to include Cooperative Learning approaches. The investment of time, energy, and effort to add Cooperative Learning to the early childhood teacher's repertoire is worth the benefits immediately gained in the classroom as well as the benefit of providing a foundation for future successes.

Cooperative experiences in free play, game playing, drama, music, and verse are "rehearsals" for the processes and skills encountered later in cooperative classroom groups. Cooperative play promotes positive interdependence, which is the drive shaft of Cooperative Learning.

COOPERATIVE PLAY ACTIVITIES

Cooperative play activities often take the form of physical education activities. These physical education activities give teachers an excellent opportunity to foster challenging and cooperative behavioral attitudes among children. Specially designed activities require a cooperative spirit to achieve group prowess *and* individual attainments. Most importantly, cooperative activities can build positive self-concepts. No matter how well-planned activities may be, teachers' attitudes and encourage-

ments are what motivate cooperative play among young children.

Some general guidelines for developing cooperative play include the following: (1) keep everyone active, (2) keep frustration at a minimum, (3) downplay the competitive nature of the activity, and (4) have evident outcomes from successful cooperation.

Some examples of cooperative activities are described in the lesson entitled "Cooperative Play Activities." It is apparent that some of these are traditional activities adapted to enhance the cooperative values of play.

Cooperative Play Activities
Bill Stinson

Help Your Neighbor

Each child moves around the room with a beanbag on her head. If the beanbag should fall off, the child must "freeze." She cannot move until someone can pick up the beanbag and place it back on her head. Keep encouraging the children to "help their neighbor" and praise them when they do.

Busy Bee

Each child has a partner. A body part is called out and each child must touch that body part to the same body part of his partner. Whenever the words "Busy Bee" are called out, they change partners.

Trio Beanbag Catch

One child tosses a beanbag to a pair of children joined arms to arms. They catch the beanbag together without letting go and transport it to a basket.

Peanut Butter

The children pair up and decide on a code word. It should be a two-syllable word or two words (e.g., football, peanut butter). The

partners go to opposite sides of the room or playground, close their eyes (or are blindfolded), and begin to call out their part of the code word until they find the person calling out the other part of the code word. Younger children may move one pair at a time to find their partners.

Move the Fence

Blindfolded, the children hold a rope and try to form various shapes asked for (square, circle, triangle) as a group. The group members may talk to and coach each other, but never let go of the rope or take their blindfolds off until they think they have the desired shape. Younger children may do this with their eyes open.

Seeing-Eye Dog

One child leads another child (blindfolded or with her eyes closed) through a series of obstacles (chairs, tires, benches, etc.).

Three-Legged Walk or Run

Partners tie or strap their near legs together and move.

Chain Race

The children form a chain by joining hands. On a signal, the chain sees how quickly it can run down to a goal line, reverse itself, and return to the starting line without letting go of the joined hands.

Caterpillar

The children lie on their stomachs, side by side and closely packed. The person on one end of the line rolls onto his neighbor and keeps rolling down the line of bodies. At the end of the line, he lies on his stomach again. The next person at the other end starts rolling.

Beach Blanketball

The children gather in groups of eight to ten around a blanket or large sheet and grasp its edges. A beach ball or cage ball is placed on the blanket. The children practice throwing the ball up and catching it with their blanket. Then the teams pass their balls back

and forth in unison toward the receiving teams. A team can toss the ball straight up and move out of the way to let the other team move in and try to catch it. A net may be used for a form of volleyball.

Giant Get-Up

The children form a circle, turn their backs to the center of the circle, and lock arms. Then as a group they try to sit and stand up again without letting go of their arms.

Growing Centipedes

Each child "hooks" up with another child. As partners, they move across the floor in one direction, then another. On the command "hook-up," they join up with another pair without changing their original hook-up pattern and move as a group of four. The centipedes eventually grow into one large centipede.

Together

This game has an infinite number of variations. The common thread running through the different activities is that the children must achieve the objective by performing the task or acting out the motion together with one or more friends.

1. Can you walk through a field of sticky glue with your partner?
2. Can you swim through gelatin with your partner?
3. Can you be real tall with your partner?
4. Can you be real small with your partner?
5. Can you be one frog with your partner?
6. Can you do a round thing with your friend while holding his hand?
7. Can you and your partner hold hands and saw wood together like lumberjacks?
8. Can you make a human chair for your partner to sit on? A two-people chair? A four-people chair?
9. Can you skip around with three friends?
10. Can you get behind your partner, wrap your arms around her front, and walk at the same time as she does? Can four people do it?
11. Can you make a fort with your friends and all get inside it?
12. Can you go through an obstacle course (e.g., under a

bench, through a hoop, across a beam) without letting go of your partner's hand?

13. Can you make a people tunnel that someone can go through?
14. Can you take turns going through the tunnel, while keeping the tunnel as long as possible?
15. Can you find your partner's heartbeat? After a quiet game? After an active game?
16. Can you each get a stick (or broom) and together with a partner try to bounce and catch a beach ball using both your sticks?
17. Can you get in groups of three or four and see if you can carry a beach ball across the gym holding it way over your heads with floor-hockey sticks or brooms?
18. With your back stuck to your partner's back, can you move around the gym? Jump forward toward this wall? Jump backward toward this wall?
19. Can you both get inside a hoop and move around while still stuck back to back?
20. Can you roll a big hula hoop on its edge so your partner can run through it?
21. Can you make a people sandwich with four or five friends (i.e., with ham, lettuce, mustard, and two slices of bread)?
22. Can you sit down across from your friend, feet to feet, and row a boat?
23. Can you roll your partner(s) like a log? Can you jump over your log(s)?
24. Can you drag your log(s) across the floor? Can you (and a friend) stand your log up like a telephone pole?
25. Can you think of some other neat things to do together?

SELECTED TEACHER RESOURCES FOR COOPERATIVE PLAY ACTIVITIES

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Chapter 7

MAKING DECISIONS

> *Every student must take responsibility for his or her own individual learning. At the same time, students must also be encouraged to take responsibility for the success of other students in the classroom.*
>
> —*Lawrence Lyman and Harvey Foyle*

As young children enter social situations with peers, the ensuing interactions trigger the need for decision-making skills. Through guided interactions, teachers can facilitate positive decision making, and children can gain confidence in their abilities as they become successful decision makers. Real, everyday choices (e.g., interactions during play, mealtimes, learning centers) must serve as the concrete base for developing these skills.

Teachers serve as decision-making models for young children. Since children are usually self-centered, their individual decisions tend to support and enhance personal gratification. Cooperative Learning attempts to decenter children, moving them from self-interested decision making to decision making for the good of the whole group. Teachers can use Cooperative Learning activities to provide structured situations that allow interactions and provide opportunities for decision making on the part of children.

According to Glasser (1986), power is one of the basic psychological needs that must be met in education. Cooperative Learning lessons for young children can be structured so that decision making is encouraged. When appropriate decisions are made, students have gained power over their own lives and over

their relationships with others. According to Johnson and Johnson (1990), positive interdependence is one element of Cooperative Learning. This positive interdependence can come about only when children freely make appropriate decisions that empower them to be successful in their relationships with others.

Everyday classroom activities can provide opportunities for cooperative decision making. As the students get ready for recess, for example, the teacher can say, "Will we need our coats this afternoon? Turn to your partner and give a reason why or why not." The students may respond by noting the trees are blowing or by recalling their experiences at lunch. The teacher then helps the group process these data and arrive at a shared, appropriate decision. Decision making can also take place during more structured learning activities, such as role-playing, lessons on holidays and heroes, and special projects.

In the lesson "Wonders of the World," children are encouraged to make decisions related to science content.

Wonders of the World
Mildred Hackler

Objective: In groups, students will investigate and make predictions about science.

Procedure: Students are grouped in twos, threes, or fours, as appropriate for the needs and skills of the class. Groups are assigned various problems dealing with science.

1. *Can you tell what I am?* At a center or designated area, various substances are available for students to smell, taste, or touch, as appropriate. The teacher specifies which sense the students will use. Groups work with substances and try to agree on what they are. Examples:

Taste/Touch	*Smell*
baking soda	chocolate syrup
salt	water

cornstarch	lemon/lime soda
powdered sugar	vinegar
sugar	soda water

Group Evaluation: Students discuss what made each substance different.

2. *How many?* The teacher gives students a problem. In their groups, students predict quantities.
   - How many marbles in a jar?
   - How many beans in a bag?
   - How many toothpicks needed to fill in the outline of a house?

Group Evaluation: Students discuss how they estimated each quantity.

3. *What animal am I?* The teacher provides information about an animal (food it eats, tracks it makes, habitat). In groups, students decide which animal the teacher is describing.

Group Evaluation: One group thinks of an animal and shares information so that other groups can guess the animal the first group's members are thinking of.

4. *How far?* Groups estimate the number of footsteps needed to reach a specified destination. Students can then pace off the distances to see how close the estimates were.
   - How far is it to the nearest outside door?
   - How far is it to the cafeteria?
   - How far is it to the office?

Group Evaluation: Students think of other distances that could be estimated using the footstep measure.

THE EASTER EGG MOBILE

Teachers of young children have the initial opportunity to prepare and structure Cooperative Learning activities. These activities can be the same ones that teachers are currently using, but redesigned in order to encourage cooperation and interaction. Decision making now becomes the focus of each lesson.

The lesson "Easter Egg Mobile" is a seasonal project that allows children to make several decisions about the project.

Easter Egg Mobile

Objective: The children will practice cutting and using fine motor skills while making decisions about the cooperative design of an Easter egg.

Grouping: Groups of three. Each group is given a copy of the Easter egg (see Figure 15). The teacher assigns each child a number (1, 2, or 3).

Cutting Task: Child 1 begins cutting out the egg. After a short interval of time, child 2 should have a turn cutting out some of the lines inside the egg. Child 3 should cut the remaining lines inside the egg. All children should have approximately the same amount of time to cut.

Coloring Task: Using the children's numbers, the teacher assigns each child a part of the egg to color. Child 1 will do the top (one end), child 2 will do the middle, and child 3 will do the bottom of the egg (the other end).

The Easter Egg Mobile: After the children are finished, the teacher has them put the parts of the egg together in order to observe the results. The children decide how the egg should be arranged from top to bottom. The children may decide to trade parts of their Easter egg with other groups. The children should decide on how their egg would look the best. When the parts of the egg have been decided on, the children tie the parts together in order to make a mobile. The completed group eggs can be displayed on a bulletin board or hung from the ceiling. This is accomplished by pasting one group's egg on the back of another group's egg and then hanging the result from the ceiling as a mobile.

Figure 15

THE UNUSUAL PUMPKIN

Decision making can be structured so that students' interests are stimulated. A real decision needs to be put before the children so that they can see the results of their decisions. In "The Unusual Pumpkin," cooperative groups emerged from individual students' tasting of foods.

The teacher provides novelty, interest, or motivation by sharing unique rather than common items for decorating a pumpkin. The cooperative groups are then faced with a problem that only they can solve by making a cooperative decision. How can the class use such strange pumpkin-decorating items and still have a nicely decorated pumpkin? The individual decisions are then reviewed by the class, and more decisions must be made by the whole group. The cooperative decision making worked! Ms. Williams' class won first place from the first grade entries in the schoolwide contest.

The Unusual Pumpkin
Sandra Williams

Objective: Students will be given novel and interesting items and decide how to design and make a pumpkin.

Grouping: Groups of three.

Background Information: Each class was asked to decorate a pumpkin for a schoolwide contest. This was a follow-up activity to emphasizing problem-solving skills in the classroom.

Procedure:

1. The teacher brought to class a grocery bag with food items: a banana, a zucchini, a yellow squash, red potatoes, walnuts, broccoli, and a package of spaghetti.
2. The teacher told the class that she must have picked this grocery bag up by mistake instead of the bag with items to decorate the pumpkin. (The children wanted the teacher to go home and get the correct bag!) At this point, the teacher told the

children that they should make do with the bag's contents. The children should decide what to do with the bag's contents and try to solve the problem of decorating the pumpkin with unlikely items.

3. During the lesson, the children taste the raw foods and graph who liked which raw foods. From the graph, cooperative groups are formed according to what the children liked, thus grouping children according to their tastes for foods. The actual pumpkin-decorating problem still remains. The food items are displayed so that each child can see them. The children are asked to think about the food items and how those items can be used to decorate the pumpkin.
4. Each group discusses the group's ideas about the problem. Groups are given a piece of paper to sketch how they would use the food items to decorate the pumpkin. After each cooperative group finishes a drawing, the drawings are posted for all the groups to see. The whole class discusses each drawing. In fact, the class may decide to use a combination of the drawings in order to decorate the pumpkin.
5. The teacher should carve the actual pumpkin for safety's sake, so that the selected food items can fit onto or into the proper places on the pumpkin. Then the children decorate the pumpkin.

LIVING OR NONLIVING?

In a science lesson, groups of children can classify living and nonliving things. In classifying objects, children must make decisions based on their own backgrounds and experiences. The lesson "Living or Nonliving?" consists of four activities.

Living or Nonliving?
Verlene Kling

Objective: Children will be able to identify the differences between living and nonliving things and determine what makes living things different from nonliving things.

Grouping: Groups of four.

Activity 1

Materials: The teacher provides a variety of items or a collection of living and nonliving objects.

Procedure: Each group collects some items for use during the activity. Pictures of living things can be used in place of the actual living things. The teacher instructs the children to classify the objects into two categories: living things and nonliving things.

The children are given time to classify their materials. The teacher asks the children how they judged such things as water and plants.

The teacher asks each group to share its classifications with the other groups and to explain the group members' criteria for categorizing living things and nonliving things. The children are encouraged to ask questions of each group's members and to discuss the classifications among themselves.

Activity 2

Materials: The teacher provides a large supply of magazines, scissors, glue, and paper.

Procedure: The children cut out pictures of objects that are *either* living or nonliving. When the students have cut out some appropriate pictures, they glue the pictures onto the paper. A bulletin board is made with the headings of Living and Nonliving. The poster projects are placed under the appropriate headings.

Activity 3

Materials: Crayons and worksheets.

Procedure: The teacher makes an appropriate worksheet showing living and nonliving things. The children discuss the objects found on the worksheet to be sure that they recognize what the objects are. The children are then asked to circle the living things in each row and to color the objects.

Activity 4: Summary Activity

Materials: A single piece of white paper.

Procedure: Children fold the paper in half so that a 11" x 8½" sheet of paper now is 5½" x 8½". On the first page, the children print at the top a title for the "book," which states: "This Is a Picture of Me—I Am Alive." On this page the children do a self-portrait in color. On each of the three following pages, the children print "I can _____." The children are to draw three different things they can do that show they are alive and to fill in the blank space of "I can _____." Examples: I can breathe air. I can jump over logs. I can eat.

The following primary level lesson, "Native American Dwellings of the Past," is based on a social studies theme. This approach could be adapted to the historical culture of the community and/or the ethnic heritage of the children. This particular lesson indicates that Cooperative Learning can be more extensive than one daily lesson in that it involves children in a two-week group investigation. The Group Investigation approach (Sharan & Sharan in press) to Cooperative Learning requires that students make a wide variety of decisions (e.g., content, presentation format) during the investigation.

Native American Dwellings of the Past
Jody Drake

Objective: The children study and investigate Native American dwellings, construct models, and make oral reports.

Group Size: Heterogeneous groups of three.

Procedure:

1. Each group of children selects a different historical Native American dwelling type (tepee, wigwam, longhouse, hogan, pueblo) to study.
2. The various groups study the appropriate portion of the social studies textbook together.
3. Roles are chosen by the children: Reader, Note Taker, and Checker. (The Checker makes sure that everyone understands

what is read; that is, he asks for explanations in each person's own words.)

4. The groups research in the library, with the members switching roles. In addition, audiovisuals can be viewed.
5. Each group contributes a chapter with illustrations to the class book *Native American Dwellings of the Past*, which is printed using a computer.
6. The groups construct models of the dwellings with an emphasis on the equal contributions of group members. These projects can be displayed in the library along with the class book. A variety of materials can be used to build the models:
   - wigwam (papier-mâché)
   - tepee (cloth and sticks)
   - longhouse (milk carton and toothpicks)
   - hogan (dough that hardens)
   - pueblo (construction paper and sand with toothpick ladders)
7. Each group can report to the class about the group's findings.
8. The major components of any body of knowledge (in this case, Native American dwellings) can be cooperatively investigated and reported using this approach. Content could be selected from any subject area (e.g., science, social studies, literature).

CONCLUSION

Cooperative Learning is an ideal vehicle for group decision making. Decision making is an important life skill, which can be enhanced by teachers of young children. In addition, Cooperative Learning lessons designed for group decision making promote the affective and cognitive goals of early childhood education.

AFTERWORD

The authors hope that as you, the reader, reach the end of this book, the benefits of Cooperative Learning for the early childhood learner are clear. We hope that you have found ideas and lesson opportunities in this book that you are eager to try with your own students. Cooperative Learning is one strategy that has the potential to make positive, lasting changes in our schools.

Opportunities for Cooperative Learning are present in your classroom every day. It has been pointed out that Cooperative Learning is more than a particular set of materials or a certain curriculum. As you look around your classroom, you will find many activities that you have previously done individually that will lend themselves to cooperation. Do not be afraid to try your own ideas—you know the children you work with best.

It has been the authors' experience that teachers are more successful with Cooperative Learning when they themselves are involved in cooperative interaction—with colleagues, with parents, with family, and with friends. For this reason, it is important that you become involved in sharing your ideas, your successes, and your failures with your colleagues. Opportunities to network with others who are trying Cooperative Learning are available. Ask around—find colleagues in your school, in your district, or in your area who are using Cooperative Learning, and share with one another.

Above all, the authors hope that you will be gentle with yourself as you try Cooperative Learning. Any innovation or change takes time. In many communities, children are coming to school having experienced fewer chances for cooperation than ever before. While these social changes make Cooperative Learning harder to implement, we believe your efforts to implement Cooperative Learning will be rewarded—now, and throughout the years—as you see the children you teach learn more efficiently, get along with others better, and develop the skills necessary for successful participation in society.

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